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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

# TEACHER'S MANUAL;

OR,

## THE ART OF TEACHING CATECHISM.

FOR THE USE OF

## TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

BY

REV. A. A. LAMBING,

Author of "The Orphan's Friend," etc.

"They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."
—*Dan.* xii, 3.

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✠ JOHN, CARDINAL McCLOSKEY,

*Archbishop of New York.*

Nihil obstat.

✠ JOANNES TUIGG,

*Ep. Pittsburgensis.*

ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE,
Cincinnati, Nov. 12, 1876.

The book called "Manual for Sunday-School Teachers" is a very useful work. I can recommend it as likely to be of the greatest advantage to those for whom it was written.

E. A. HIGGINS, S. J.

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ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE,
Cincinnati, Oct. 14, 1876.

I have examined with care the manuscript of Rev. Fr. Lambing's "Manual for Sunday-School Teachers," and it affords me great satisfaction to say that it is an admirable work, full of sound doctrine, judicious suggestions, and happy illustrations of the qualifications, responsibilities, etc., of Catechists. I sincerely hope and confidently predict that a warm reception will be accorded to it by the Rev. Clergy, Sunday-School Teachers, and the parents of the children of our Catechism classes. It requires only to be known to be duly appreciated. Certainly every Sunday-School Teacher, every Catechist, wherever the English language is spoken, should have a copy of this excellent and most useful Manual.

JOSEPH C. CARRIER, C. S. C.

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TO THE

HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS OF CHILDREN,

INVISIBLE COMPANIONS, GUIDES AND DEFENDERS OF THOSE WHOM JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, WHEN ON EARTH, DEIGNED TO TAKE UP IN HIS ARMS, EMBRACE, AND BLESS: SPIRITS WHO ALWAYS SEE THE FACE OF THE FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN;

This Little Volume,

PREPARED FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE VISIBLE GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN, IS HUMBLY AND REVERENTLY DEDICATED.

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# INTRODUCTION.

It is the misfortune of every country in which the faith has been but recently planted, to be subject to many spiritual privations inseparable from its condition. Time is required for the growth and development of those institutions which are at once the ornament and the bulwark of religion, an evidence of faith, and a means of preserving it. But where, as in this country, the population is composed of so many different elements, and where a large proportion of the people emigrate from a thoroughly Catholic atmosphere to cast themselves upon the troubled sea of materialism and infidelity, which has overwhelmed so large a portion of American society, there is an additional peril; and it is not to be wondered at that many souls should suffer shipwreck. The efforts of the people for the preservation of their faith are not, in all cases, what they should be; because, coming as they do from a land so different from ours, they cannot appreciate the full extent of the danger to which they are exposed. Especially is this true of parents, who, having passed their childhood in a Catholic land, are not aware of the vigilance that is necessary to train a family under circumstances so different. Nor are

they always willing to hear and be guided by the advice of those who are fully acquainted with the dangers to which faith and morals are here exposed. Carelessness and indifference are too often to be met, and never do they fail to bear their bitter fruit. Hence it is that the religious training of so many children and youth receives so little attention from a very large number of parents.

The Church, ever loyal to her divine mission, and endowed with a heavenly wisdom, as well as a burning zeal, sees, in the religious training of children and youth, the great work of our day, and the only hope of society. Her superhuman efforts in the cause of education are bearing consoling fruit; but her inability adequately to supply the wants of all her children, by furnishing them such teachers as she can approve, forces the religious training upon the pastors individually. These, although burdened with a multiplicity of other pressing duties, cannot look with indifference upon the innocent children going unprepared into the jaws of death, and are forced to provide as best they can for their religious training. They are obliged to commit the teaching of the little ones to such persons as may be found disposed to undertake it, not because they deem it an affair of secondary importance, but because Sunday, the time to which they are forced to confine it, is too short for the amount of work that is crowded upon it, and because this is the only part that can thus be delegated to others. No person can adequately take the place of

the priest or of the parent, supposing the latter is, in all cases, what the name implies; for, granting that others have acquired, or with a moderate expenditure of time and study can acquire, the necessary amount of knowledge, they have not the affection and the opportunities of good parents, nor the authority and divine right to teach, which are inherent in the priestly dignity, and which the youngest child in the school instinctively acknowledges and respects. Yet the zealous teacher performs a work worthy of all praise, and, with his opportunities, actually effects more than the vast majority of parents. Indeed the vigilance of the latter is too often found to relax in proportion as the teacher increases his efforts.

Under these circumstances, the pastor usually appoints such persons as he deems best suited to the work of instruction, and, if the school is large, places over them a superintendent. But, owing to the exalted nature of the work, and the unaccountable unwillingness to undertake it of many of such as are qualified, it must be admitted that a thoroughly competent body of teachers and a perfect organization of the school, are seldom to be met. On the contrary, the only persons who are generally found disposed to undertake the work of instructing the children are not those of ripe years and mature judgment, but young, willing hearts, that rise but one degree above the children themselves. Whatever may be said of their knowledge of the Christian Doctrine, they cannot meet with complete success with-

out an acquaintance with the art of teaching; and this they have not, and cannot, under the circumstances, be expected to have. Here they are at sea, and it is in vain they would look around them for succor. Books of instruction are prepared for persons of every condition in life, from the child in the nursery to the priest at the altar; for the Sunday-school teacher alone no provision has been made. There is no book that will instruct him *how to teach*. Here and there, on a fugitive page of some book, he may chance to meet with isolated precepts or suggestions, but no systematic effort has been made to place at his command an exhaustive treatise on the subject. An impression seems to have obtained, that, if a person teaches at all, he has made sufficient sacrifice, without being at the further trouble of giving the subject of teaching a scientific study; as if his pleasure would not increase with his increased efficiency. Or the study has been neglected, because it was believed that experience is the only school in which to learn: which betrays a forgetfulness of the fact that we are capable of being taught by the experience of others, as well as by our own. The teacher has greater opportunities for the employment of his talent than is commonly supposed, and his success depends upon the cultivation of that talent.

I have often thought, and still think, that if some one of our enterprising publishing houses were to issue a monthly Sunday-school teachers' paper, which should be devoted exclusively to the discussion of questions

immediately connected with the religious training of our children, it would be a powerful means of perfecting our schools, and of securing to the young a more thorough acquaintance with their religion and the obligations it imposes upon them. It would draw to this important matter the attention of those who should be most deeply interested in it, and inaugurate a progressive movement which nothing else could effect, and yet without which there can be little advancement.

In the absence of such a book or periodical, and with a view of supplying a deficiency which I, in common with many others, have felt, I have prepared the following pages, in which whatever has been learned from others has been combined with what the experience of many years as teacher, superintendent, and pastor, has taught me. The aim of the work is to instruct in the art of teaching and explaining the Catechism, to guard against faults that are sometimes committed, to correct erroneous views, and to give the teacher a right idea of the manner of performing the duties of his calling with pleasure to himself, satisfaction to the pastor and parents, and profit to the children; in a word, *I have tried to teach him how to teach others.* All that has been said has been directed to this one end: that of making the work a hand-book for those actually engaged in teaching Catechism. Much has been collected from various sources, and arranged more or less perfectly under different heads, for the convenience of the teacher, that it is impossible to find in any other book

in our language; and it would be with no ordinary expenditure of time and labor that he would be able to collect the same amount of information, by employing all the means in his power. So far as it treats of the important subject that fills its pages, it will be found, it is believed, practical and to the purpose; and the teacher who follows out the precepts and suggestions which it contains, cannot fail to become a more efficient instructor. I am conscious that there are a number of other topics intimately connected with the Sunday-school which might have been introduced to advantage, and the absence of which may be regretted by some persons, and regarded by others as a blemish. But it has been my study to reduce the size of the book as much as was consistent with a proper treatment of those topics with which it is absolutely necessary the teacher should be familiar. By this means the work has been confined to such a size as places it within the reach of every parent and teacher.

Great stress has been laid on the securing of a successful recitation, not, however, because it is the ultimate end to be aimed at in the Sunday-school, but because it is the immediate end, the necessary means of attaining the ultimate end, and a certain index of the success that is being met with in its attainment. The object of all religious instruction is to train children to lead good Christian lives; but that can be seen to a great extent in the distant future only, while con-

tinuous, successful recitations afford almost the only evidence that can be had in the present that the children are acquiring such a knowledge of the truths of religion and the duties of a Christian as will furnish a well-grounded hope that their subsequent lives will be exemplary.

Although the work has been prepared more especially for Sunday-school teachers, it will be found, in many respects, equally useful to parents, and to all others engaged in instructing the young in their Christian Doctrine.

Such as it is, the work is submitted to the public, and especially to teachers, in the hope that it may be instrumental in promoting the religious training of the young, and may draw to this important subject the attention of others better able to discuss it properly.

PITTSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA.
Feast of St. Francis of Sales.
Jan. 29, 1877.

# CHAPTER I.

## Religious Instruction.

### § 1. The scope of religious instruction.

The opening question of the Catechism gives, in a few words, the end of man's creation, and, by so doing, shows what his Christian training must be. He is there told that he has been created "to know God, and love Him, and serve Him in this world, and, after, to see and enjoy Him for ever in the next." The scope, then, of religious instruction of a child embraces a thorough knowledge of the letter and spirit of the Catechism. Says Canon Oakley: "The Church Catechism will be the text-book; and, if we succeed in conveying to the mind a clear idea of the truths there taught, nothing more will be needed toward furnishing the young Christian with all the doctrinal knowledge necessary to an ordinary Catholic."*

It teaches him to know God, and the truths which He has taught; the duties of his state of life, and the manner of fulfilling them becomingly; the dangers that beset his path in the spiritual life, and the way to

* "The Priest on the Mission," Lecture V, No. 1.

avoid them; or, if that be impossible, the manner of resisting them; the means of grace, and how to use them properly; and it holds out to him the hope of a future reward and the fear of punishment, as motives to incite him onward in the way he should go. If to this is added the good example of those around him, it will perfect his religious training in childhood and youth. The following extracts, from the writings of Rev. Thos. J. Potter, further illustrate and confirm what has just been said:

"Catechetical instruction has for its object those *truths* which the Christian is bound to *know*, and those *duties* which he is bound to *fulfil*, in order to save his soul; its immediate and essential end is the instruction of man in all that is necessary or useful for the attainment of his salvation.

"The learned Bishop of Orleans beautifully defines catechetical instruction to be the Christian education of the soul; or, in other words, he shows that the word, Catechism, properly understood, embraces at least three ideas: the *recitation* of the Catechism, the *explanation* of the Catechism, and the Catechism reduced to *practice*. The mere recitation of the Catechism, parrot-like, without an explanation on the part of the catechist, and an appreciation and intelligence on the part of the catechised, of its meaning, will avail nothing. The careful recitation of the Catechism, with a full appreciation and intelligence of its meaning, will avail no more, unless its precepts and its teachings be reduced to practice, since

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it is this practice alone which is efficacious for the salvation of the soul; it is this practice alone which, forming the Christian character, brings forth to Christ those souls who have been redeemed by His precious blood.

"From this idea of it, it follows plainly enough that catechetical instruction does not consist in merely teaching children the words of the Catechism. By catechetical instruction the Church understands such an explanation of her saving truths as that her children, even the youngest of those who have attained the use of their reason, may clearly know and perceive what is required of them in their own proper state of life,—an end which will never be secured by the mere committing to memory, parrot-like, of the words of the Catechism. And this is a truth which pastors, and all who are concerned in teaching Catechism, cannot impress too deeply upon their minds: that faith which is necessary to salvation is not an act of the memory, but of the understanding; it rests upon the knowledge of the Christian truth, and not upon the retention in the memory of the mere words in which that truth is expressed. They only know the Catechism who, in their own way, of course, in their own language, and in their own manner of conceiving and expressing a subject, are able to give an account to themselves of the meaning and signification of the Christian doctrine."*

* "The Pastor and his People," pp. 215–217.

## § 2. THE NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

The religious training of children has in all ages been justly regarded as a matter of the greatest importance. The fact that, from the moment that reason dawns, the child becomes accountable to God for his every thought, word, action, and omission of duty, and that he will be greatly influenced in after-life by much of what he learns even before he has come to the use of reason, is sufficient to convince all who feel an interest in his temporal and eternal welfare, of the importance and necessity of the earliest possible commencement of his religious education. He will be unable so to regulate his conduct as to please God and fulfil the end for which he was created, unless he is taught what the law of God commands, and what it forbids; nor then, unless this teaching is so plain as to be easily understood, and so deeply impressed as to become, as it were, a part of his being.

Circumstances are not wanting to enhance the importance of an early acquaintance with the Christian doctrine, and never did these combine, as in the present day and in this country. The nature of our institutions, and the condition, inclination, and pursuits of our people, are of such a kind as to introduce the child into active life at a very early age. Not in the cities only, but also in the country districts, children are commonly met who are more deeply engaged in the duties of an active, independent life at nine or ten years, than their

parents were at twice that age. The consequence is, that children are further removed from parental control, and are more exposed to temptation than before, while the opportunities for learning are greatly diminished, and the inclination for it much weakened, or, it may be, entirely lost. The demand for a thorough religious training is increased, but the actual education received is not in proportion. Add to this, that a large number of children are deprived of the benefit of a parochial school; and that, instead of the cultivation and protection which their faith and morals would have received from it, they are exposed, at a tender age, to the perils to both which are inseparable from the public schools,—and the importance of an early Christian training will appear in its true light. The inability or unwillingness of some parents to afford their children the advantages of home instruction, is among the greatest evils to be lamented in our time, and gives us the liveliest apprehensions for the future of religion and society.

But a religious training is not merely a dictate of reason, it is also a command of God: "Hast thou children?" says the Holy Spirit, "instruct them." "A young man, according to his way, even when he is older, he will not depart from it." "Instruct thy son, and he shall refresh thee, and shall give delight to thy soul." The Sacred Scripture affords numerous examples of the happy effects of a careful religious training in youth, among which may be mentioned the younger Tobias, whom his father, "from his infancy, taught to fear God,

and to abstain from all sin ;" and the chaste Susanna, whose "parents, being just, had instructed her according to the law of Moses." From the same sacred volume may also be seen the melancholy result of a neglect of such training, examples of which are many.

The love which our divine Saviour has shown for children, and the threats with which He menaces those who shall scandalize one of the little ones that believe in Him, point out with sufficient clearness the spirit of the New Testament in this particular. The spirit of the Church has ever been that of her divine Founder. For this reason, she has always regarded the young with the most tender solicitude. In baptism she adopts them as her children, and opens to them the treasures of her graces; and, having done so, she is anxious to maintain them in the possession of the sacred privileges of which she has made them partakers. Conscious of the manner in which the world will seek to allure them from the path of innocence, the moment that reason begins to dawn; how the flesh will, in time, develop those passions, so imperious and importunate in their demands for indulgence; and how the spirit of evil will leave no means untried of corrupting their young hearts,—the Church, in her maternal care, is anxious to seize the first opportunity of instilling into their tender minds those lessons in knowledge and piety upon which the preservation of their innocence depends. She is the more anxious, from the conviction that innocence, although easily lost, is recovered

with difficulty by those who labor to restore it, to pass in silence the large number of those who make no account of the loss they have sustained. It is for the attainment of the same object that she unceasingly impresses upon parents the obligation that rests upon them of instructing their children in the Christian doctrine, both by word and example, from their tenderest years. When her solemn injunctions are disregarded, as they too frequently are, her threats take the place of the gentler voice of persuasion, and she denounces the judgments of God upon those who turn a deaf ear to the call of duty. For this end it is that her pastors establish parochial schools, often at great labor and expense, and require parents to withdraw their children from the pestilential air of the public schools, and send them to hers. Not content with this, she organizes Sunday-schools, and encourages those who, under the guidance of her ministers, undertake the religious instruction of the young, offering them numerous indulgences as a partial recompense for their zeal in behalf of her children. Her bishops, popes, and councils have not thought it beneath their dignity to pay the most scrupulous attention to whatever relates to the religious training of the young, and their preservation from the blighting influences of the world, into which they are thrust at so tender an age. Abridgments of the Christian Doctrine, suited to their limited capacity, have been prepared by order of these, and all has been done that seemed possible, in order that their innocence might be preserved and matured into a vir-

tuous and exemplary life. In a word, no argument is wanting to prove the importance and necessity of a thorough religious training.

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## § 3. CHILDHOOD THE MOST SUITABLE TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

All the arguments that evince the necessity of a Christian education prove, at the same time, that youth is the proper season at which to begin it. This is so evident, and so generally admitted, that it is superfluous to offer any extended remarks upon it. The subjoined extract from the work of Father Potter, above quoted, although addressed to pastors, is no less applicable to all those engaged in the religious training of the young, and is very much to our purpose:

"It has been said, and truly, that the child is the father of the man; and no less truly, that, as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined; and most truly, and most solemnly of all, that, if we train up a child in the way in which he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it. It is the universal law, admitting of but few and rare exceptions, that, such as is the child, such will be the man. The impressions which are made in childhood are indelible,—for good or for evil, they will hardly ever be swept away; and hence the paramount obligation which rests upon the pastor (and

upon parents also) of bringing the dear children of his flock, the children who are to be his glory and his crown, under the influence of religious teaching as soon as they are capable of comprehending it, and of profiting by it. He thus secures them for God, and lays the foundation of those lasting impressions of faith, of piety, and of truth, which will bring forth their fruit in due season, and gain to God many souls, who, without this early teaching, would wander hopelessly and irrevocably out of the way of salvation. If we do not give our people a real taste and relish for religious instruction when they are young, they will never acquire it later on. If we do not lay the foundation of Christian purity and Christian faith deep in the soul of the youth, before levity, dissipation, and evil passions have made it their own, we shall find that our teaching comes too late, and that our most zealous efforts will hardly repair the evil which has been already done."*

The season of childhood and youth is admirably adapted to the acquiring of religious knowledge,—as yet the child is unfit to be employed at labor: his body requires time to gain strength, and leisure is at his command. The mind, too, is free from the care and anxiety that are soon to become its portion. He has, besides, a natural love of knowledge, a curiosity that prompts to research, and a heart free, as yet, from the corrupting influence of the world, and ready to receive and to be

*"The Pastor and His People," by Rev. Thos. J. Potter, pp. 219, 220.

guided by the truths of religion. In a word, the child possesses all the qualifications that aid and encourage him, not only in the pursuit of knowledge, but also in reducing it, when acquired, to practice in leading a virtuous life; but when age and acquaintance with temptation and sin warp the judgment, weaken the will, and develop and strengthen all the lamentable evil consequences of the fall of man, these favorable opportunities and dispositions will, in a great measure, have passed away.

Without dwelling longer on this point, I shall conclude with another extract from Father Potter, which, though containing a painful reflection, is yet proven, by the experience of pastors of souls in general, to be, unhappily, too true: "If children once emerge from the pliable and impressionable years of childhood, without having acquired a knowledge of their religion, in all human probability they will live and die in their ignorance; as they become immersed in the busy occupations of life, they will grow at once more indifferent to religious truth, as they will find less and less time to devote to its consideration. Hence it is that we meet, but too often, among our people, neither prayer nor self-denial; that we find passions without rein, and those duties which must perforce be discharged, discharged without motive or merit; so many sermons, and so little fruit; so many exhortations to virtue, and so little response. It is this deadly ignorance which paralyzes all the efforts of the priest, and renders all his

sacred functions of little or no avail. The sinner approaches to the sacred tribunal ignorant of essential truths; he neither knows how to accuse himself of his sins, nor to elicit an act of contrition. On the bed of death he neither understands nor appreciates those acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition, which the priest vainly suggests to him; he has neither patience, resignation, nor the necessary dispositions for the worthy reception of the last sacraments; and he dies as he had lived, without hope and without fear, carrying with him to the presence of God the foul load of that ignorance, the curse of which he will never fully understand, until he reads it in the light of God's eternal truth." *

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## § 4. THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

The principal means of acquiring religious knowledge are: home instruction, the parochial school, the Sunday-school, and private reading and study by the child or youth. Writing as I do for Sunday-school teachers and others engaged in teaching Catechism, I shall not enter into a lengthy discussion of the merits of any of these means, except that which immediately concerns me; reminding the reader, however, that it is the exclusive scope of this work, and not the relative

* "The Pastor and his People," pp. 214, 215.

merits of the different means enumerated, that induces me to treat them thus briefly.

1. *Home Instruction.*—The opportunities of parents, their love of the child, the confidence he places in their teaching, the respect he has for their example, the authority they exercise over him, and their ability to shield him from all improper influences, place them in a position to instruct him, both by word and example, to which no one else can attain. So necessary is the coöperation of parents, that, without it, it is impossible to train up a child in a proper manner. It is in their power either to confirm or undo the work of all others engaged in the training of their children. Were I writing exclusively for them, no subject could be found more pleasing or profitable than that of their duty in regard to the religious instruction of their little ones. Their duty in regard to the Sunday-school will be treated of in its proper place. A few examples from the lives of the saints will here be given of the lasting good which parents, especially mothers, are capable of effecting, if they are animated with the proper spirit; and they are the more valuable because of the numerous opportunities afforded of practising them, and the apparently trivial circumstances upon which they depend. When there is question of holiness in youth, we turn instinctively to St. Aloysius Gonzaga,—a name, we hope, familiar to every parent and child. In the opening chapter of his life we read that "his mother let no day pass without forming the sign of the cross,

with the babe's own hand, and was for ever repeating to him, in accents of reverence and tenderness, the names of Jesus and Mary. She taught him the 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary,' when he could scarcely form his words." Of the mother of St. Alphonsus Liguori it is said that, "after having blessed her children, she made them pray to God, and every evening she assembled them around her, and taught them the elements of the Christian faith, reciting with them the Rosary and other prayers, in honor of the different saints. She was careful to prevent them from associating with other children of their age; she wished that grace should anticipate in them the malice of sin, and that they might be early taught to hate it. It was thus she guided her dear Alphonsus, and made him truly holy." At the mention of the name of St. Francis of Sales, the reader will picture to himself one of the most perfect models of meekness and gentleness that has ever adorned our race. Yet the conduct of his mother, who played so important a part in the formation of his character, is easily imitated, though worthy of admiration. Let the following serve as an illustration: "The pious countess bestowed her undivided attention upon the education of her child, never suffered him to go out of her sight, and omitted no opportunity of forming him to early habits of virtue. She conducted him herself to church, instilled into his infant mind the most profound veneration for the temple of God, and a fondness for prayer, for religious instruction, and all the exercises of piety which are there

practised. She even took him with her in the visits which she paid to the poor; she initiated him in the art of relieving distress by such attentions as were adapted to his years, and employed him in distributing her charities. It was her practice to read to him the Lives of the Saints, and to accompany the lecture with reflections suited to his capacity." Every scene in the life of the saint bears the impress of these early instructions. It is hardly possible to have pious and exemplary children, without having pious and exemplary parents to train them.

2. *The Parochial School.*—As a religious educator, the parochial school holds the highest place. These schools act not only on the principle that the pupil i a child of God, as well as a member of society, but on the more correct principle that he is first a child of God, and then a member of society. For this reason the religious training that is to fit him for properly fulfilling his duty to God, receives greater attention than the secular learning that is to prepare him for a place among his fellow-men. Nor do his mind and heart alone receive attention; his corporal eyes are also acted upon by the good example of those around him. Nothing is overlooked that is capable of exercising an influence upon them. The teachers are either religious, consecrated to God by vow, or lay persons, carefully selected; the pastor's frequent visits both encourage and direct teachers and pupils; the class-books are carefully prepared by competent persons, and even the pictures that adorn the

walls read to the children lessons of piety and virtue. Opportunities are afforded for special instructions in preparing for the reception of the sacraments, etc., and innumerable advantages are derived from the fostering care which religion extends over all, which only those can duly appreciate who understand the workings of the system. How different from the public school, where irreligion or sectarianism reigns; where the teachers have no special motives for discharging their duties properly; where their knowledge is frequently little, and their morality less; where no attention is paid to the moral culture of the pupils; where text-books are often teeming with misrepresentations, and, in a word, where the very atmosphere is filled with a pestilential malaria. In the absence of a Catholic school, I attended these schools for at least ten winter sessions, and am not ignorant of their influence; and I make no hesitation in affirming that it would require almost a miracle to bring a child through them without his faith and morals being seriously injured, if not entirely lost.

It is pleasing to notice the manner in which Catholic schools are multiplying throughout the country; but it is still much to be regretted that the circumstances of many parishes are such as will not permit them to undertake so useful and necessary a work. But it is unaccountable that parents are found who, despite the warning of their pastors, still continue to send their children to the public schools, and to expose them to the dangers inseparable from these nurseries of immo-

rality and infidelity. They should read the learned Father Müller's excellent work on *Public School Education*, in which the workings of that iniquitous system are exposed; and, by pondering on the lessons which the book contains, become sensible of the real extent of the fault of which they are guilty.

3. *The Sunday-School.*—This being the subject of the present work, needs not be treated at length in this place. Sufficient attention, it is hoped, will be found to have been paid to it in the following pages. I may remark, however, that, while I am disposed to say as much as possible in its favor, I do not wish to exalt it to a position which it does not merit. It cannot be placed on a level with home instruction, supposing, of course, that this is what it should be. But, in the present state of affairs, it has too often to supply the place of it, owing to the want of sufficient knowledge on the part of some parents, and of a due appreciation of their duties on the part of others. Much less can the Sunday-school be placed on an equal footing with the parochial school. There the teachers are both capable and willing to instruct the children; they have ample opportunity, appreciate their duty at its proper value, and bestow upon it sufficient attention. The Christian atmosphere of the surroundings impresses, by example, much of what is learned by precept, and favors and encourages the growth and practice of the Christian virtues. When the parochial and the Sunday school work hand in hand, they are productive of the happiest results, and lay deep

and broad the foundations of Christian society. But where these schools are not found, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Sunday-school; and where they are found, the Sunday-schools are a powerful auxiliary. Besides, in home instruction and in teaching Catechism in the day-school, the same or a similar plan of explaining, illustrating, and questioning must necessarily be adopted as that employed in a well-regulated Sunday-school: the doctrine being the same, and the children being the same, the plans of teaching cannot differ in any essential point. In fact, for the time being, they become schools of religious instruction. For this reason, any remarks that are made on the manner of conducting the Sunday-school are, with some exceptions, equally applicable to religious instruction imparted to the young at any other time, or by any other person.

4. *Private Study and Reading.*—There can be little difference of opinion regarding the advantages to be derived from the private reading and study of the Christian Doctrine, and it is much to be regretted that it is not more common; but it is still more to be regretted that it is seldom resorted to by those who stand most in need of it. A certain amount of knowledge seems to be required to create an appetite for more, and, for this reason, private study can hardly be ranked among the ordinary means of acquiring a knowledge of the Christian Doctrine. It is more commonly used as a means

of perfecting knowledge, of settling a disputed point, or of recalling what was once learned, but has since been forgotten. Sunday-school teachers should, however, earnestly recommend it to the members of the senior classes.

# CHAPTER II.

## Parents and the Sunday-School.

It is worthy of remark that, in giving the ten commandments, by which the chief duties of man to his neighbor are so clearly and explicitly defined, God should have delivered no precept to parents to love their children. But that which has not been expressed in the written law, is traced, in indelible characters, upon the heart. Parents cannot but love their offspring. Even the animals do so, and submit to the most astonishing privations, and, if need be, expose their lives to danger, for the protection of their young. But, while affection for the child is thus engraven upon the heart of parents, it is not always guided in its workings by that heavenly wisdom which religion infuses, and which would prompt them to prefer the spiritual and immortal to the animal and perishable part of the child's being. Too often they rear him for earth, rather than heaven. The care and Christian training of a child is a terrible responsibility at any time—and, would to God, it were better understood!—but especially is it so in these evil days, when the very atmosphere is impregnated with the poisonous effluvia of vice and immorality. The mother contemplates upon her knees a creature made to the image and likeness of the living

God, and clothed in our frail flesh; one whom, from all eternity, the divine mind has contemplated as a possible being upon whom, in the fulness of time, the divine power was exerted in a creative act; for whose welfare the three Persons of the Adorable Trinity have poured out the treasures of their wisdom, goodness, power, and love, and who is now intrusted to her for a time, but for whom, at the expiration of that period, be it long or short, she will be called upon to give a strict account. There stands, in the plain language of truth, a heart that is destined to be the resting-place and temple of the Deity upon earth, or the abode of demons; a creature that must, for all eternity, be the companion of angels or of devils; one in whom the glory of God will be reflected, or upon whom the unquenchable flames of hell will forever feed. What a terrible reflection for any one, but, especially, what a reflection for parents! In becoming parents, and receiving that child from the hand of God, they freely contracted the obligation of giving him, at what hour soever he demanded it, an account of their fidelity to the trust reposed in them. From this obligation they can never hope to be freed; and even God Himself will not remove it wholly from them, so long as He leaves them and their children in the world. Hence, their first duty is, to instruct their child in the fear and love of God, and in the knowledge of His holy law; and their first duty, in relation to the Sunday-school, is to bear well in mind that, however successfully it may be conducted; however assiduous the

teachers may be in instructing; however rapidly their child may advance in the knowledge of the Christian doctrine, or however docile he may be to the inspirations of grace which accompany this increase of knowledge, their responsibility as parents has not been, and cannot be, thereby diminished. They contracted the obligation of parents, by an act of their free-will; they cannot set it aside in the same manner.

But the teacher is invested by the Church with a special authority and commission; he devotes his time, his toil, and attention, to the spiritual welfare of the child of these parents; he lessens the burden of their responsibility, and renders the proper discharge of their onerous duties less difficult; and for these reasons he is justly entitled to their respect and that of their child. This respect, however, should not be confined to mere sentiment, but should assume an outward form of expression. The parents should feel themselves under obligations to the teacher, and should act upon the sentiment which that feeling inspires. They should speak respectfully of the school and its teachers, avoid uncharitable remarks and criticisms, and discourage and forbid the same to their child. If the teacher has been forced to have recourse to punishment, and the child returns from school, murmuring and displeased, or, if it comes to the worst, and an open rupture takes place between the child and his teacher, the parents should not be too credulous, and should not give way to the impulses of their natural affection; for, although teachers

may be, and sometimes are, guilty of imprudent conduct, the presumption is always in their favor. The child is young, and, from his nature, is apt to be guilty of little tricks or misdemeanors, which, although not seriously wrong, yet interfere with the good order necessary for a successful recitation, and which must, for that reason, be promptly repressed. He is, besides, the reporter of the affair, and will even unconsciously present his own side of the question in the best light, and he is speaking to persons who he knows are willing to hear and espouse his cause. The more serious the difficulty between the teacher and the child, the greater should be the prudence of parents in dealing with it. But in no case should they permit the child to absent himself from school; it would be an act of imprudent condescension, that might call forth bitter tears of fruitless repentance in after years. Let them engrave this truth deeply on their minds, unpalatable though it be, that *every act of theirs which directly or indirectly lessens the child's respect for his teacher, will, in the end, lessen his respect for themselves*, because it undermines the very foundation of respect for authority, and must endanger the whole edifice. It is one of those lessons of experience to which we would fain close our eyes, but are not permitted.

Parents must, however, advance one step further than that of cultivating in the heart of their child a feeling of respect for the person and character of the teacher. He is instructing *their* child, freely offering himself to

assist them in the discharge of a duty from which they can never hope to be exonerated ; the least they should do, then, is to assist him. The most effectual manner of doing so is to have the child study the lesson at home during the week, and not merely on Saturday evening or Sunday morning. They should also question him upon the lesson, and, as far as they are able, or their time permits, assist him to learn it ; for, what may appear an easy task to them, may not, in reality, be so to the child. Did they devote sufficient attention to this (and they can devote it to nothing more necessary), they would remove much of the cause of complaint which they sometimes imagine they find against the Sunday-school and the teacher. Reason alone teaches that a child cannot study and recite a lesson in the brief space of a single hour, in the Sunday-school, and Christian zeal for his thorough religious training would not permit him to do so, if it were in his power. *The success of the child depends upon his studying the lesson at home.* But in this, as in all else, parents should be guided by the dictates of prudence. There is a right way and a wrong way for doing everything. Many parents, and indeed nearly all, force their children to the study of Catechism in a manner so ungraceful, as to inspire them with an antipathy, bordering on positive hatred, for the very name of Catechism,—a feeling which they too often carry with them through life for all religious instruction. While it is a sacred duty of parents to maintain their authority over the children and have all their orders

promptly obeyed, it is by no means necessary to have immediate recourse to harsh means; the more judicious the parents are, the seldomer they do so. Persuasion, reasoning, remarks on the advantage of knowledge, and of a respectable position in class, and the danger and disgrace of ignorance, should be urged, while a sense of duty should accompany and give a tone to every motive. While, in a word, the child should be made to study and learn the Catechism, willingly or unwillingly, every motive that could be prudently brought forward to make him do so with a good grace, should first be exhausted; and only when these have failed, and it becomes absolutely necessary, should force be used as the last resort. The more children are induced to love the Catechism, the more easily and rapidly will they progress. Love renders all things easy and agreeable, and the study of Catechism is no exception to the general rule. Well would it be for parents if they could be convinced of this truth, and induced to regulate their conduct in this matter accordingly.

It is needless to place among the duties of parents to the Sunday-school that of seeing that their children attend regularly and punctually. This duty is not, however, discharged by commanding them to do so, but by personally observing that the order has been obeyed, for the temptations calculated to make children absent themselves are numerous and strong, especially in cities; yet there are few inconveniences to which teachers are forced to submit that are more trying to their zeal and

patience than to see that, when they are willing to offer their time and labor to parents, the latter set so small a value upon their sacrifices. But the injury inflicted upon the teachers is transient; that inflicted upon the children and parents is lasting, and will produce, in time, its bitter fruits. Nor should parents rest satisfied here. The interest they take in the religious training of their children should induce them to examine them from time to time, to learn from their personal observation what progress the children are making, and to convince the latter that they are in earnest in their efforts to have them thoroughly instructed in the Christian Doctrine.

If the conduct of parents were in all cases governed by these principles, the progress of the children would be different from what it is too often in the present, and their after-life would furnish consoling evidence of the care and attention bestowed upon their early religious education.

## CHAPTER III.

### The Correct Idea of Teaching Catechism.

We are powerfully influenced in the pursuit of an object by the idea that we form of its nature and importance. If it is thought to be valuable or desirable, a greater degree of exertion is exercised in its attainment than if it is considered of small moment. This law of our nature will accompany the teacher into the school-room, and impress its character upon all that he does. For this reason it becomes necessary for the superintendent and teachers, before going further, to form a correct idea of what will be required of them, if success is to attend their labors in behalf of their young charge. It will be the aim of the present chapter to give that notion of the work to be performed; those that follow will enlarge on the manner in which it is to be accomplished.

Teaching, broadly defined, is assisting another to increase his store of knowledge, whatever that knowledge may chance to be. The professor of language, history, mathematics, astronomy, law, medicine, etc., teaches the rudiments of those sciences; the tradesman teaches his apprentice the mysteries of his particular trade; the farmer teaches his sons to till the soil, and his wife

teaches her daughters whatever pertains to domestic economy.

This notable difference, however, intervenes between secular and religious teaching: that, while the former is mainly engaged with the faculties of the understanding, or mind, as it is commonly called, and takes no further notice of the heart than is necessary to keep its affections under such control as will prevent them from molesting the mind in the pursuit of its object, the opposite is true of religious training, in the view that is here taken of it. The teacher of the Christian Doctrine acts upon the mind and enlightens it, not for its own sake, but as a means of reaching the heart, and leading captive its passions and affections. The reader must not here fall into an error, common among some of the sects, that of imagining religion to have its seat in the feelings and affections. It has not. Religion deals with facts, and, if they rest on faith, they are not, for that reason, the less certain; on the contrary, man then substitutes the infallible word of God for the fallible testimony of the senses, or of unaided reason. It is with the will that man serves the Creator, not with the feelings. But the will is a blind faculty, and must be drawn toward an object by its attractiveness, or repulsed by its deformity. Upon this is based the necessity of religious instruction, that man may learn what is agreeable to God, and be induced to perform it. When the mind is enlightened, it enkindles the affections of the heart, and they, in turn, command the

will to embrace what is pleasing, and repel what is offensive.

Teaching consists of two parts: *education* and *instruction.* The former has to do with what is implanted in the mind and heart of man by the Creator, and its duty is to unfold, draw out, and strengthen their faculties and powers ; the latter is occupied with the collecting of knowledge from external sources, and storing it away in the mind, making the pupil master of a portion of the wisdom of other minds, found in books and other repositories. Neither, it will be seen, is complete without the other. Both must go hand in hand, and the more intimately they are blended, the more perfect will be the training. This will be rendered more intelligible, by showing its application to the matter now under consideration.

The teacher labors to *instruct* the child, by causing him to commit the letter of the lesson to memory, and by explaining it to him in such a manner as will make it perfectly intelligible ; and this done, he proceeds to *educate,* by having him give back the knowledge thus acquired, and fix it indelibly upon his memory by a judicious use of question and answer. In this manner the memory is rendered more attentive ; the powers of the mind are developed and strengthened to grasp and comprehend the doctrine contained in the lesson ; the affections of the heart are induced to love it, if good, or to hate it, if evil, and the will is impelled to reduce it to practice in the routine of daily life. The

child unaided cannot perform the entire task, neither can the teacher; but both must work together, in harmony, and the process of education and instruction is united, and becomes one single act. The more perfectly the child is enabled to grasp the subject of the lesson with his understanding, the better will he know and comprehend the teaching of the Church and the duties of a Christian; the more unreservedly he accepts and embraces them with the affections of his heart, the more ardently will he love the Church and his duties; and his will, being influenced by the light of the understanding and the affections of the heart, cannot but resolve to reduce the lessons to practice in the discharge of his duties, causing him, as is said of the child Jesus, "to increase in wisdom, and age, and grace, before God and man."

From all that has been said, it will readily be seen how far those teachers fall short of excellence who do not insist upon the children committing the text of the lesson to memory, but read for them, from the Catechism, what they have failed to learn by their own application. Teaching, it will also be seen, does not consist in spending a certain fixed time in the class-room with the children, nor in exciting them to emulation by the promise of a paltry reward. These topics, however, will be treated at length in their proper places.

Teaching consists in causing the children to *know* and *understand* the letter of the Catechism, and, as far as they are capable, imbibe its spirit. The religious

instruction of children may then be defined : Teaching them to know and understand, as far as they are capable, the mysteries of our holy religion, and their duties to God, their neighbor, and themselves ; and in what manner they are to perform these duties, in order to please God in this world, and secure their eternal salvation in the world to come. The teacher, or the system of instruction, that aims at less than this, falls not only below the standard of excellence, but also below that of duty. The object of instruction is not simply to make the children more learned, but to make them *better Christians.* For this it is that a teacher is employed ; for this that he insists upon regular attendance and good order ; for this that he assigns lessons, and requires them to be learned ; for this, in a word, he insists upon all the requisites of a well-ordered school. Let him reflect deeply and attentively upon the definition that has just been given, and fix indelibly upon his mind the nature and extent of the obligations he contracted in becoming a teacher. The moment he loses sight of them, or permits the children to do so, his labors will be, in a great measure, in vain.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Superintendent.

It is not intended, in the present chapter, to give an exhaustive treatment of all that relates to the qualifications and duties of the superintendent, since, on the one hand, he is supposed to be a person of ability and experience, and to be under the immediate control and direction of the pastor; and, on the other, he acts only indirectly on the children. Hence much that will be addressed to the teachers, with whom I have principally to deal, will be equally applicable to him.

The presence of a superintendent is necessary for the proper management of the Sunday-school. If the school is large, as it is in many congregations, especially in the cities, it will generally be found advantageous to have two superintendents: a gentleman for the male, and a lady for the female, department. This, however, will be left to the discretion of the pastor, whose prudence will readily determine what is best for the school, under the circumstances.

The superintendent, like all in authority, must be possessed of certain qualifications, some natural, others acquired, without which his labor will be neither a source of pleasure to himself, nor of profit to the

school. Among those most necessary must be reckoned, in the first place, an ardent desire of promoting the spiritual welfare of the children committed to his care. He should place before his mind, in as clear a light as possible, the dignity and responsibility of his office, the confidence reposed in him by the pastor, who makes him, to some extent, a fellow-laborer with himself; and, most of all, the value of the souls of the children to whom he has become a guide and master. Reflecting upon these sublime truths, he cannot but be made fully alive to the importance of the proper training of these little ones of the flock of Christ, and stimulated generously to put forward all his powers for the accomplishment of so noble a work. Without this ardent zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice he will accomplish but little. The children will not be in earnest, unless they see that he is in earnest.

To this zeal must be brought a degree of activity and of administrative ability, that will enable him to organize the school and conduct it successfully; to appoint the proper persons for teachers, and obtain from them the necessary care and attention to their duties, and to do, in a word, all that relates to his office in such a manner as will best promote the advancement of the children, and remove from the mind of the pastor as great an amount of anxiety as possible.

The superintendent should not, however, be a noisy or fussy man. It is a common error to act on the supposition that we can keep others in order by putting

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ourselves out of order. He will seldom be obliged to speak in a high tone, or tap the bell, for the purpose of restoring order; and the seldomer the better. A sound of this kind attracts the attention, not only of the disorderly children, but of the entire school, distracting their eyes and minds from the lesson, and it is hardly possible that every eye and mind will immediately return to its proper occupation. On the contrary, many of the children will be tempted to talk, or in some other way to infringe upon the good order that should be maintained in the school. Besides, the too frequent employment of the voice or the bell will make their use less intelligible to the children. These and other considerations, that will readily present themselves to the mind of the judicious superintendent, cannot fail to convince him that the best way to preserve order in the school is to begin by keeping himself quiet. One pair of eyes, it has been well said, is worth more than twenty pairs of lungs in preserving order. But I shall treat of these and kindred subjects in the following chapters, to which he is referred. Let him move quietly about the room, looking on silently, and seeing that both teachers and children perform their respective duties. His presence will be enough. In doing so, however, he should be careful to show the teachers due respect, for the children will, to a great extent, be influenced in their conduct toward the teachers by his example. Still he should not connive at abuses. The time is set apart for the instruction of the children, and the teacher who

faithfully performs his duty to the class will have no leisure moments for useless conversation, either with the class or with other teachers. The superintendent must expect to meet with teachers who will not perform their duties without an occasional admonition, and when it is necessary, it is his duty to give it. It is, however, a delicate matter, and one requiring prudence. A teacher should never be corrected in presence of his class, except, perhaps, for a serious dereliction of duty, or one requiring immediate attention. Generally speaking, a glance of the eye or a motion of the hand, unperceived by the children, will be sufficient.

Among the virtues most necessary for the superintendent, a degree of patience, which will enable him to preserve evenness of temper, holds the first place. Crosses will not be wanting to checker his path, and, as many of these cannot be avoided, he must be prepared to submit to them with a good grace. The betrayal of impatience, and, much more, of anger, would be extremely detrimental to the preservation of good order, and would lower him greatly in the estimation of both teachers and children. There are children to be met who find a malicious pleasure in annoying a person who they perceive can be annoyed. A quiet firmness is no less necessary to keep every one in his place, without attracting too much the attention of the school. In conclusion, it may be added, that the superintendent should possess, in an eminent degree, all the qualifications of the good teacher.

In the appointment of teachers, if the power of doing so be left to him, he should consult the good of the children, and, if convenient, should confer with the pastor upon the fitness of the candidate. He should select teachers of a suitable age. We too frequently see persons engaged in instructing others, who, if we are to judge by their apparent age are better fitted for a place in one of the senior classes. This is to be attributed, in a great measure, to the fact that persons who are of a proper age either do not feel themselves competent to teach, or are unwilling to assume the duties and responsibilities of that office. The superintendent is then compelled to employ those who are willing, or otherwise leave the children without instructors. Many of those who have attended Sunday-school for a number of years have become attached to the room and the exercises, and naturally wish to remain as teachers, when they have attained an age to be freed from the obligation of attendance at class. But, while their devotion to the cause of instruction is to be commended, no one can help but feel that, in the hands of such persons, it will be difficult to bring the school up to the proper standard. They cannot have the experience, maturity of judgment, and commanding appearance, that belong to riper years, and the absence of which will appear to greater disadvantage, if, as sometimes happens, they are placed in charge of youth approaching their own age. That youth must be favored by nature in an extraordinary degree

who is capable of filling the office of teacher, before he has attained the age of, at least, seventeen years. To assume its duties at an earlier age will most probably be injurious both to himself and to the children over whom he is placed.

Besides the selection of persons of a suitable age, he should give the older children to the most experienced teachers, and assign to each class a teacher of its own sex. Little difficulty will be experienced in carrying out this recommendation with regard to the classes of girls, for there are generally more female than male teachers. But, if it becomes necessary to place a lady in charge of a class of boys, he will do well to select one of the older and more prudent, and assign her a class of the younger children.

Nor should a teacher have a larger number of children than he is capable of instructing properly. Few are able to do full justice to a class of more than ten; and for teachers of ordinary ability, ten will generally be found to be too many. As a rule, six or eight will be sufficient for any teacher.

The superintendent should pay particular attention to such of the children as he knows stand in need of it. These will be the larger ones, whose religious training has been neglected at home, and who, in consequence, are ignorant of what they should know, in order to lead good Christian lives. They will be all the more deserving of special attention, if, as is generally the case, they have not yet been admitted to the

sacraments. Any harshness of manner, or impatience, would make them lose courage, and, perhaps, cease to attend,—a circumstance that would be equally painful to him, and detrimental to themselves. Children that are of a naturally timid disposition, or are gifted with but little talent, should claim his kind indulgence. Those, too, who are preparing for first communion should be the object of his most tender solicitude, and he should do all in his power to have them properly prepared for the reception of that most holy sacrament.

He should confer with the pastor on the text-books to be used, systems of marks to be adopted, and examinations to be held; report habitual absentees, whether teachers or children, and, in a word, without being officious, give him whatever information might tend to increase the efficiency of the school, and promote the spiritual interest of the children, individually.

He should, especially, be on his guard against changing the text-books. Should the question arise, it is his duty to compare the new book with the old, and examine carefully into their relative merits. And should the new one be found to be the better, a further question remains to be settled: The children have spent much time in the old one, and have many of its forms of expression engraven upon their minds; they are more or less familiar with the arrangement of its parts, and, with all its faults, are attached to it. Should they then be put to the expense and inconvenience consequent upon a change, even if they were to be bene-

fited by it to some extent? The number of our Catechisms, and the numerous faults that abound in them; the readiness with which we take to anything new; the requests of teachers, who may not be meeting with the success they expected, and which they blame, perhaps, upon the Catechism, and all the other circumstances that may seem to argue in form of a change, must be regarded with caution and distrust. Of this much, however, he may be certain: that there are *always* disadvantages to be met, while the advantages are at best only doubtful. For these reasons let his changes, if any, be few, and adopted after mature deliberation.

Any remarks that are necessary should be carefully noted down, and made, not in the midst of studies, but at their close, and before dismission. The distribution of library-books and Sunday-school papers should also be so arranged as not to interfere with the recitation of lessons. Nothing should be permitted to infringe on this precious time, which is not a moment more than is absolutely necessary. If visitors enter the school, as they may, from time to time, they should not be permitted to distract the children or their teachers; but, while every mark of courtesy is extended to them that could reasonably be expected, they should still not be permitted to feel that they are anything more than visitors.

Finally, in the opening and closing prayer, and in all that he says and does, the superintendent should

study to cultivate a spirit of reverence in the children, and make them sensible that what they are engaged in is a holy work, and has nothing less than the good pleasure of God and their own salvation for its ultimate object.

# CHAPTER V.

## The Dignity and Responsibility of the Teacher.

All that has been said in the foregoing chapters is intended to prepare the way for that which is properly the subject of our treatise. We come now to treat of the teacher, considered in himself, and in his intercourse with the children, and to prepare him for the fitting discharge of the exalted duties which he has taken upon himself. But, before proceeding further, it is proper that he should have a correct idea of the position he occupies in the face of the Church and the people.

The office of teacher implies more than is generally felt, even by teachers themselves. The respect that is paid to them is founded not on the name they bear, but on the authority with which they are invested, and on the sacrifices they are supposed to have made in fitting themselves to give instructions, and which they are constantly called upon to make, when actually engaged in teaching. The teacher is, in many respects, the superior of the people. His office places him in a position more exalted than theirs, while his character, to correspond, should be above reproach, and his manner worthy of imitation. In every respect he must be a light for the guidance of the children. All this he is by virtue of his office. But the people will fre-

quently require more from him than they are justly entitled to demand,—an error which they commit, not from a suspicion that he will fall below the standard of excellence, but because they have conceived a higher idea of his dignity than he has himself.

The dignity and responsibility of the Sunday-school teacher are, for many reasons, greater than those of the teachers of profane sciences. The object for which he has been selected, and the consequences attending the manner in which he discharges his duties, place him far above them.

When Christ had established His Church, He commissioned His apostles to go forth and make known to all nations the doctrines and practices upon which the salvation of mankind was to depend, that all, to the end of time, might be made partakers of the blessings which He had purchased for them, at so dear a price. In the fulfilment of this divine commission, various orders have been established in the ministry, each with its proper sphere of action, but all centred in the one grand object: that of disseminating the doctrines once delivered to the apostles.

In addition to those who teach by virtue of a divine commission, the Church has always favored the employment of others, to fill an inferior position as auxiliaries, among whom the Sunday-school teachers hold the highest place. Without a divine commission they teach the same truths as those which once fell from the inspired lips of the apostles. Though not permitted to

mount the pulpit, their work is of a kindred nature with that of those who are. The doctrines which they explain, and the principles of morality which they inculcate, are as necessary for salvation as those which flowed in streams of golden eloquence from the lips of a Chrysostom, an Augustine, a Vincent Ferrer, or a Bossuet. Not only so ; but the Sunday-school teacher prepares the way for the triumph of these champions of the faith. Their words would, in a great measure, have been scattered to the winds, had it not been that he had previously prepared the minds and hearts of the people to comprehend their language, and acknowledge the importance of the truths which they proclaimed. The Church, as we have seen, recognizes the teacher's dignity, acknowledges her obligation to him, and rewards him by granting him numerous indulgences, in return for the favor which he bestows upon her. The pastor does not hesitate to intrust to him that portion of the congregation requiring the greatest care and attention, his joy in the present, and his hope in the future. Parents confide their innocent children to his care, that he may implant in their tender hearts those truths, and instruct them in those pious practices, upon which an eternity of happiness or misery depends. They have elevated him to a position above themselves ; for, while they instruct, or should instruct, the children during the week, they send them to him on Sunday, that he may correct what has been learned amiss, explain what has been imperfectly understood, supply what may still be want-

ing, and, in short, that he may impress the seal of his approbation upon the work of their hands.

But nothing should serve so forcibly to remind the teacher of his dignity and responsibility as the value of the souls to which he has become a guide and director. What are they? Nothing less than the image of the living God, and the masterpiece of creative power, wisdom, and love. They are the children of God the Father, redeemed by the sufferings and death of God the Son, and sanctified by the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, which He declares to be His temple. They have been purchased by the sufferings and death of a God, and are to be nourished by His precious body and blood. They have a right to all the graces of the Church, and are destined to the eternal enjoyment of God in the kingdom of His glory. During their sojourn upon earth, they are the object of the tender solicitude of a God who declares that "His delight is to be with the children of men;" and who says, "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." To each He has given an angel of heaven, who always sees the face of the Father, as a guide and protector; He has given His own Mother to be their mother, and has commanded them to address Himself by the most endearing of all names, that of *Father*. During His life upon earth, Jesus Christ frequently took them up in His arms, embraced and blessed them, and declared that "he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that

believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." Surely one who takes upon himself the religious training of so favored a creature, must be an object of the liveliest interest not to men only, but to the angels and saints of heaven. These all unite in demanding from him the faithful discharge of his exalted duties, while they pour forth earnest prayers in his behalf.

The time, also, at which the children are placed under his care, adds to the importance and responsibility of his position. The beauty of the soul, freed from every stain by the waters of baptism, is now increased by the dawning of reason, and that noblest endowment of man in being added to the privilege of a child of God. This child, innocent, sincere, confiding, and inexperienced, comes to the teacher as the young man in the Gospel did to Jesus Christ, and asks, with him, "Master, what shall I do that I may possess eternal life?" It can suffer no delay, for already the enemy of man is on its path, laying snares for it with a vigilant malice that makes us tremble for its future. Its heart is an empty vessel, that must, ere long, be filled with good or with evil. A contest has begun and is waging, between the Creator and the great enemy of man, for the possession of that soul for time and eternity, and the teacher is the principal leader of the visible army of God. Pastor, parents, children, all look up to him. If he is wanting in his duty, angels will weep, the de-

signs of God will, in a measure, be frustrated, a soul may be lost, while the vaults of the abyss will echo with shouts of fiendish exultation. What sacrifices could be thought too great to avert so terrible a calamity from the unsuspecting child? Yet how much is in the hands of the teacher! Were he a mere spectator, having no special interest in the welfare of the child, he could not but grieve to see the loss of its innocence, and to behold its unsuspecting heart sullied with the guilt of sin. How often do not people weep to see a child exposed to temptation! And there are few who can witness the corruption of a young heart without a feeling of pain, tears being not unfrequently the testimony they bear to the depth and sincerity of their emotions.

The culpable indifference of many parents, or their ignorance of the obligation devolving upon them of instructing their children, adds to the responsibility of the teacher. Not that he should be held accountable for their negligence, but because it renders the proper discharge of his duties the more arduous and necessary. It is vain for us to declaim against this unnatural sin of parents: it cannot be wholly remedied. The teacher is forced to work at the disadvantage in which it places him, no matter how eloquently he protests, or how much it stands in his way, and prevents him from realizing the dearest wish of his heart. He must take things as he finds them, or retire from office, and expose the children to the danger of being lost to religion and to God.

Home, too, that should be a sanctuary into which the child should be able to retire from the dangers to which it is exposed in the streets and in company, is not unfrequently the scene of its most violent temptations, and of the greatest peril to its innocence. We shudder to think of the language that falls from the lips of some parents in the presence of their children, and the intemperance, quarrels, total disregard of religious duties, and other crimes, that invade the sacred retreat of home. But neither regrets nor tears will improve it. The only hope that remains for such unfortunate children is found in arming them for the struggle through which their innocence, perhaps their virtue, must pass; and, however hopeless the task may appear to be, its success or failure is in the hands of the Sunday-school teacher more than of any one else. It is his part not merely to instruct them to know their duties, but, much more, to induce them to act in accordance with that knowledge.

The teacher should seriously reflect upon the dignity and responsibility of his position in the Church; and with a heart filled with confidence in God and love for the children, and with a will prepared to undergo every sacrifice, go manfully to work, remembering that he is engaged in helping to save souls "not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ," and that his reward will not be of this world, but a never-fading crown of glory in heaven, where "they that instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity."

# CHAPTER VI.

## The Qualifications of the Teacher.

### § 1. THE TEACHER'S ZEAL.

When the Sunday-school teacher enters upon the duties of his calling, we naturally suppose that he is actuated by the proper motives; that he places before his mind not merely the pleasure he expects to derive from spending an hour in the society of the children; the gratification it will afford the superintendent and pastor to have secured his services, or the profit he may derive from having the truths of religion vividly recalled to his mind. However commendable these may be considered in themselves, we must suppose that he is influenced by higher and more unselfish motives; that, reflecting on the need which the children have of instruction, and the dangers to which ignorance of duty would expose them in the future, he is anxious to make himself an instrument in the hands of God for preparing them to meet successfully the trials and temptations to which their faith and morals are hereafter to be exposed; and that he desires their salvation, and is willing to perform an active part in aiding them to secure it. While this ardent zeal will merit an eternal reward, and go far toward making him

an efficient teacher, it will detract nothing from the pleasure and profit that he will derive from his intercourse with the children.

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### § 2. THE TEACHER'S KNOWLEDGE.

It is a principle universally admitted, that no one is capable of teaching others what he has not learned. For this reason a certain amount of knowledge is necessary for the Sunday-school teacher. His acquaintance with the doctrines of the Church, her ceremonies, and the duties of a Christian in every state of life, should be greater than that afforded by the Catechism used in class. He must study one of the larger works on Christian Doctrine, among which *Perry's Instructions*, and *St. Liguori on the Commandments and Sacraments*, will be found very useful. Familiarity with these will enable him to explain and illustrate the lesson in a manner that cannot fail to make it interesting and instructive. If he is employed in teaching either of F. Müller's smaller Catechisms, the study of the largest will be of great advantage to him. But knowledge of the lesson is not sufficient. It must be more general. Terms are employed, in every work of instruction prepared for children, that are not intelligible to their young minds, and it is the duty of the teacher to translate them into language which they can easily understand. But in order to do so, he must be familiar

with the precise meaning of the terms, as they are used by the Church, without which he would be in danger of speaking in a vague and indefinite manner, and perhaps of committing grave errors, by conveying a wrong idea to the minds of the children.

This knowledge is rendered all the more imperative, owing to the style in which Catechisms for children are usually written. No work of this kind could be expected to employ such words only as would fall within the capacity of the little ones; but the Catechisms prepared for the English-speaking children of this country are singularly unhappy in point of language. While it would be foreign to my purpose to stop to inquire into the cause of this blemish, I shall say, without hesitation, that not one of our elementary Catechisms is in this particular what it should be, and what it might easily be made.

This circumstance demands of the teacher the knowledge of every difficult word and phrase found in the lesson, and the ability to explain all in an intelligible and satisfactory manner. He should acquire, as we shall presently see, such a command of language as will enable him to speak in all his explanations in a clear, confident, fluent, and intelligible manner, so as to rivet the attention, while he enlightens the minds, of the children. This, however, is an art which is more difficult than is generally supposed, and one in which few are found to excel, even after years spent in constant practice. But of this, further on. It is a con-

scientious duty of the teacher to study each Sunday's lesson. With a careful preparation he will appear before his class fully acquainted with whatever requires explanation, and with the explanation which is required; and will neither hesitate nor blunder, nor perform his duty in such a manner as not to interest his class, satisfy his own conscience, nor fulfil the end for which he was employed. The consequence of a want of preparation would be, that, having failed to interest the children in the lesson, they would seek to interest themselves in a thousand distractions, and would lose their respect for him, and their desire of knowledge.

But knowledge, however precise and extensive, is of little use to the teacher, if he has not the faculty of communicating it to others: something which is not necessarily implied in its possession. It is not unusual to meet with persons familiar with a particular science or department of knowledge, who are yet without the power of making others participators in the fruits of their industry. This faculty of communicating knowledge is in part a gift of nature, and in part acquired by study. As an art, it depends upon language, style, method, etc., of which I shall now proceed to speak.

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### § 3. THE TEACHER'S LANGUAGE.

What should be the characteristics of the teacher's language? It should, to be perfect, combine the simplicity

of the child with the accuracy of the finished scholar. He must feel no reluctance in descending to the level of the little ones he is addressing. It should be his constant study to simplify his language as far as possible, never employing a word, the meaning of which is not familiar to the least talented member of the class; or if the Church has consecrated a word to express a certain doctrine, as, *Infallibility, Eucharist, Transubstantiation*, etc., he should be careful to explain it in an intelligible way to the children. Let him observe what sort of words they use in their intercourse with one another and in their answers in class, and follow their example. They know better than he how to make themselves understood. Saxon, instead of foreign words, should be used, and short rather than long ones. But all long words are not, for that reason, to be regarded as difficult. The only rule that can be given on this important point is, *study to make yourself perfectly understood by all.* It is a common error for teachers to imagine that, because the meaning of a term appears clear to themselves, it must be equally clear to others; or perhaps, I should rather say, it is a common error to *act* upon that supposition: for, if a word conveys to our minds what we think to be a clear idea, we usually pass on, without stopping to inquire what impression it has left on the minds of the children, or whether it has left any impression whatever. Yet the importance of a clear and well-defined idea is patent to all. It is essential to progress. Let the teacher undertake to

draw from the children, in their own words, in answer to judicious questions, the substance of the lesson, or of his remarks upon it, and he will perhaps discover, to his disappointment, that their minds are almost as perfect a blank as they were before his explanations. This is the true and only reliable test of the extent to which the class have understood and profited by the exercises.

It not unfrequently happens that the teacher himself has not so correct an idea of the meaning of words and expressions as he imagines. When reviewing the lessons during the week, it will be of great advantage to him to question himself closely upon the meaning of such of these as do not seem perfectly intelligible to him, or even of those which he believes he fully comprehends; and he will frequently find that his knowledge is by no means so precise or extensive as he imagined. Yet, if he is unable to give a clear explanation of the lesson to himself, how can he expect to give it to others of a more limited capacity? Besides, we can never convey to others the full store of knowledge we possess on any subject, nor can we expect to bring into class, and command in a moment, all the information acquired by a previous study of the lesson. These last remarks should never be forgotten.

To simplicity of language must be joined accuracy of detail. The doctrines of the Church are so well defined, and the realm of truth, in many points, lies so near to that of error, that care must be taken to prevent a

wrong impression from being conveyed to the minds of the children. Such an acquaintance with our language as I have been speaking of, united to an accurate knowledge of the teaching of the Church, will prevent any error from being committed in this particular.

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### § 4. THE TEACHER'S STYLE.

The style of the teacher, when explaining the lesson, should be somewhat diffuse. It must not, however, be inferred that he should be a great talker. Nothing could be further from what is meant. He should explain the lesson fully, using rather many than few words, and should be careful to stop frequently, and ask questions on what has been explained, so as to fix it indelibly on the minds of the children. His language should not be discursive, wandering off to a distance from the point under consideration; on the contrary, his remarks should be strictly confined to the subject; and all irrelevant thoughts, however fine, that may present themselves to his mind, should be unceremoniously rejected. This, however, is a relative quality. With the smaller children he must scrupulously keep to the point, making use of frequent repetition; but a degree of latitude may be permitted, and may be necessary, with those who are more advanced. But with none should he be too discursive, but should make all his remarks bear *directly* upon the matter contained in

the lesson. This subject will be treated at length in the chapter on Explanation.

To these qualities must be added *vividness* and *animation*, if he would hope to interest the class. Those children are deserving of pity who are forced to listen, for the space of an hour or more, to questions and explanations delivered in a death-warrant style; and we need not be surprised to see them grow restless and disgusted, and proceed to the opposite extreme. We know with what feelings we, who strive to control ourselves, listen to an indifferent discourse. If we wish others to respect our feelings, for the sake of our ease, let us learn to respect those of children, for the sake of their improvement. Familiarity with the lesson, an acquaintance with the ceremonies of the Church, and the lives of the saints, and an ardent desire of promoting the happiness of the children, will make it easy for the teacher to put life into his remarks. The few discourses found in the "Life of the Curé of Ars" are splendid examples of the style and language suited to the young.

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### § 5. THE TEACHER'S METHOD.

From style we pass to method. Different writers on the subject of instructing the young have enumerated a greater or less variety of methods, but all may be reduced to these four: the *Lecturing*, the *Interroga-*

*tive*, the *Elliptical*, and the *Illustrative*, or *Pictorial*. It must, however, be borne in mind that no one of these can be termed *the best method*. That only is *best* which, under the particular circumstances, best serves the purpose of the teacher. This method can be adopted most successfully at one time; that, at another. I shall endeavor, as we proceed, to point out the particular advantages of each, and the circumstances most suitable to its employment.

1. And, first, of the *Lecturing* method. By this is understood, as its name sufficiently indicates, that in which the teacher discourses for some moments on the lesson, or on some particular point in the lesson, asking from the class nothing more than an attentive hearing. He may employ this method to great advantage, at intervals, and with the larger children, but should not adopt it as an every-day resort. If he is gifted with a ready flow of language, he may be strongly tempted to do so, for it is so much easier for us to talk than it is for us to make the children talk, as we must, in teaching by question and answer. But, unless he is gifted with a vivid imagination, animated style, earnest manner, and an inexhaustible fund of illustration, he cannot command the attention of the children for any great length of time. They will not pay attention, unless he gives them something more to do than simply to listen. If they are conscious that what has been given to them in the lecture will afterward be exacted from them by close and rigid questioning, they will be interested and

listen attentively, but upon no other condition. For this reason he should pause at short intervals—short, remember—and ask questions on what has just been explained. The younger the children are that compose his class, the more frequently should he pause, so as not to tax their memories too much. With this precaution, the teacher may employ the *Lecturing* method upon such subjects as admit of it. But it is the method for the larger, rather than for the smaller, children. But he is never to lecture for the sake of lecturing, nor from the pleasure he finds in teaching certain subjects, nor with a view of displaying his knowledge. The good of the class is the first and only law of the teacher, and hence he should never tell the children what they should reasonably be expected to have already learned. Speaking of this method, the learned Abbé Dubois says: "Here is a very important caution, which we should like to print in large letters on each page of the Catechism, in order that the priest (or teacher) who explains it might have it constantly before his eyes: *Speak little, and make the children speak much.* Almost all catechists are great talkers: this is a crying abuse. Think you in good faith that your little children are following you through that long string of words and phrases where you cease to be catechist, to become preacher? Think you that their little minds, which have not, which cannot have, any capacity, are able to follow and comprehend your long arguments and interminable proofs? Do you not see by their gestures, their behavior, their smiles,

and, perhaps, by the pranks they play one with another, that their thoughts are far away from your explanations? Would you recall their attention? Nothing more easy: break off your long details, and put a sudden question, without immediately saying to whom you address it. Immediately you will see every head raised; no more whispering, no more looking about, no more marks of levity or weariness. Perfect silence: why? Because each one fears to be obliged to speak in his turn. But you say, 'Must we then be silent, and be contented with our presence among the children?' No; but you must speak much less than you do, and only that you may rectify the inaccuracies of your children's answers. There is not one of your long and useless explanations which might not be most usefully given, by dividing them sentence by sentence, and by making each sentence the matter of so many questions, to which you would oblige your children to reply. This will keep them constantly attentive, and exercise their intelligence marvellously. We repeat it, therefore: *Speak little, and make the children speak much.*" *

*Example.*

The following will serve as an example of the *Lecturing* method. It is supposed that the children addressed are preparing for their first confession, and have committed the act of contrition to memory.

If you study this act of contrition carefully, you will

* "Zeal in the Work of the Ministry," pp. 501, 502.

see that it is made up of three parts: first, there is a hearty sorrow for the sins committed; second, a detestation of sin; and third, a firm purpose of amendment. Every act of contrition must have these three parts, or it will not be good, and will not do for confession. You all know what *sorrow* means. It is a feeling that comes into our minds when we think of the great good we have lost by committing sin, and that makes us wish we had not committed it. A *hearty* sorrow means a sorrow that is not merely in our looks, or in our words, but is in our hearts. A *detestation* of sin means a very great hatred of it. But why should we be sorry for having committed sin, and why should we hate it? The act of contrition gives several reasons. The first is, because, by committing sin, we lose all right to heaven. So long as we are in the state of grace, we have a right to a place in heaven with God and the saints and angels, and, if we die, we shall go there. But, when we commit a mortal sin, we lose our right to heaven, and cannot have it again, till we are sorry, and repent of our sin. This is a good reason for being sorry for sin, but it is not the best reason. The second reason for being sorry is, because, by committing sin, we deserve the everlasting punishments of hell. I have already told you what hell is, and what its eternal punishments are; and you know that, if you die guilty of only one mortal sin, you will be cast into it. This is also a good reason for being sorry, but still it is not the best. Either of these reasons will do for sorrow

in confession, if we have some love of God along with it. A person might be sorry for his sins, because they made him lose his good name, or his health, or something like that; but this kind of sorrow would never do. But the best of all reasons for being sorry for our sins is, because they are displeasing to God, who is so good in Himself, and so good to us. [The teacher will find no difficulty in enlarging on this point.] But, from whatever reason sorrow comes, it must be *interior;* that is, it is not enough for us to say we are sorry, or to look as if we were sorry, but we must be really sorry in our hearts. Then our sorrow must be *supernatural;* that means that we must be sorry for our sins because we have offended God whom we love, and who rewards the good and punishes the wicked. The more we love God, the better our sorrow will be. Next, it must be *universal;* that is, we must be sorry for all the mortal sins we are guilty of. It would not do to be sorry for some, and not sorry for the rest. Then it must be *sovereign;* that means that we must be more sorry for having offended God by our sins, than we should be for the loss of anything else we have, or could have.

The third part of the act of contrition is a firm purpose of amendment. That means that we must make up our minds not to commit sin any more, and to do all we can to keep from it.

The whole act of contrition, then, means that we must be sorry for the sins we have committed, and must

hate them, first of all, because they displease God, who is so good in Himself, and so good to us; and next, because sin makes us lose heaven and deserve hell. And we must make up our minds not to commit sin any more, because we do not want to offend God, who loves us, and because we do not want to put ourselves in danger of losing heaven and deserving hell.

2. Closely allied to the *Lecturing* is the *Illustrative*, or *Pictorial*, method, which, properly speaking, is nothing more than a species of lecturing. It consists in a vivid and lifelike description of a particular scene, etc. Many circumstances connected with the life and passion of Christ, the institution and administration of the sacraments, the Deluge, the giving of the commandments to Moses, death, judgment, heaven, purgatory, and hell, are fit subjects for word-painting. The more vividly the picture is drawn for the children, the more will it rivet their attention, and be impressed upon their memories. Without vividness it is nothing. The teacher should study to perfect himself in this method, but should not have recourse to it, unless the subject under consideration will admit of it, and unless deep reflection has produced the picture in his own mind. He cannot convey to the minds of others what is not in his own. The perfection of a picture, as we all know, consists in the judicious selection and grouping of the circumstances of person, place, time, etc. Extravagance and improbability must, however, be carefully

avoided. While this method is admirably adapted to the fixing of important scenes on the minds of the children, and serves, besides, to arouse and encourage them, its utility consists, after the perfection of the pictures, in the rarity with which it is employed. Unlike the lecturing method, the teacher should seldom pause to question the class until he has finished; but when the picture is drawn and perfected, he should go back, and carefully and closely question them on what they have heard. Questioning, let the teacher remember, is *never* to be dispensed with. It is the grand method that never grows old.

*Example.*

We suppose that the teacher has explained to the children that the Jews were in possession of the true religion before the time of Christ; that he has sketched their coming out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, and that he has given an idea of the manner in which God communicated with man in primeval times. His description may then become more vivid, like the following. But it must be borne in mind that the whole manner of the teacher plays an important part in perfecting his picture:—

As Moses was leading the people through the desert, he came to a mountain called Sinai. It was here that God gave the Ten Commandments, about fifteen hundred years before Christ was born. It happened in this way: God told Moses to command the people to be very

good for the next three days, because He was then going to speak to them ; and He also told him to draw a line around the foot of the mountain, and not to let any man or any animal cross it. On the morning of the third day the whole top of the mountain was covered with a thick, black cloud ; loud thunder was heard, that shook the whole mountain ; bright-red lightning flashed in great flames, as if the mountain was all on fire, and thick smoke rose up from it, as if it were burning. When the people saw it, they were afraid, and trembled. After that they heard a noise like a person blowing a large trumpet, and it grew louder and louder, till it shook the ground where they stood. When Moses heard it, he told the people to come up close to the mark he had made, and to listen, for God was going to speak to them. This made them still more afraid, for they did not know what would happen to them. After that God came down on to the top of the mountain, and the thunder and lightning ceased. He then called Moses to come up to the top where He was. But as soon as he had gone up, God sent him back to tell the people to be very good, or He would kill them. When Moses had done this, he went up again, and the people saw him go under the cloud, toward where God was. After that God spoke the Ten Commandments, with a great loud voice, like thunder, and all the people heard them. He then wrote them on two slabs of stone, which Moses carried down, and kept, so that the people should never forget them.

But when Moses came down, his face was bright, something like the sun, and the people could not look at him till he had put on a veil. This is the way God gave the Ten Commandments that you learn in your Catechism.

3. I shall not stop here to treat of the *Interrogative* method, or that of question and answer. It is, as has just been said, the principal instrument in the hands of the teacher, and will, for that reason, be made the subject of a separate chapter.

4. The *Elliptical* method is that in which the teacher, after having asked the question, repeats the answer, leaving a word or phrase only to be supplied by the child addressed. This is not, however, to be understood of reading from the book to those who have neglected to study, but rather of encouraging such as are not yet able to study all the lesson, unaided, and whose frail memories stand in need of assistance. Prayers are usually taught in this manner to beginners. From what has been said, it will be plain to the teacher that, while this method may be employed to advantage with the smaller children, to enlist their attention, excite their interest, and encourage them, it is not at all suited to the larger ones. It would foster in them a spirit directly the opposite of that which its judicious employment would produce in the little ones.

The *Elliptical* method is so easily understood as not to require an example to illustrate it. In the use of it,

the teacher must not permit the children to fall into the habit of asking for "the first word" of the answer.

These different methods, including the *Interrogative* (to be treated further on), though distinct from one another, will generally be combined by the skilful teacher. His will be what may be termed a *Mixed Method.* Let him study the nature and use of each, and the rules that govern it, and his experience in teaching will soon enable him to employ them singly or combined, so as best to promote the advancement of the children.

An example illustrating the *Mixed Method* will be found at the end of the chapter on the art of questioning.

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### § 6. THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF TEACHING.

1. The systems of teaching may be reduced to three: the *Individual*, the *Collective*, and the *Simultaneous*. The first is that in which the teacher instructs one child at a time, and makes, in reality, as many classes as there are members in the class. This system is employed to the greatest extent by teachers of limited experience and ability. No good teacher is found to use it; for no system could be open to more serious objection. It effectually prevents the teacher from explaining difficulties, as is required; for the time allotted to the recitation is barely sufficient to hear each member recite his lesson. An explanation given to one, supposing

that by dint of unusual care he has kept the entire class at the same lesson, will not interest the other members, for the reason that it is only indirectly addressed to them. With this system it is, besides, impossible to secure attention and good order, unless they are the result of servile fear,—the worst motive from which they could proceed. That which is essential to the one and the other is, to interest and employ every member of the class during the entire time set apart for the recitation. Hence this system is never to be employed except, perhaps, when a strict examination is to be passed for admission to the sacraments, or for promotion. With these remarks I shall dismiss it, confident that no teacher will continue it, after having become acquainted with its objectionable features.

2. The next, the *Collective* system, has as many advantages as the last has disadvantages. It is that in which the same lesson is assigned to the entire class, and all are instructed in it at the same time by questions addressed to each member separately. The question, however, need not, and, as we shall presently see, should not be addressed to each member in regular order, beginning at the head. But, as this is the system which I especially recommend to teachers, and for the perfection of which this work has been prepared, I shall defer any further remarks till we come to the chapter on the art of questioning.

3. In the last place we have the *Simultaneous* system, or that in which all or a part of the class repeat

the lesson in unison. It possesses many advantages for a class of small children, particularly for such as are learning their prayers; but it is not at all adapted to the wants of the larger ones. In employing it, the teacher should be careful not to let the children speak so loud as to distract the classes near him. He must also be quick to notice whether all the children are speaking or not, and must not permit a part to remain silent. For further information the teacher is referred to the chapter on the prayer class.

4. Besides these, there is the *Lancasterian System*, or that of mutual instruction, in which the members of the class are divided off, two by two, and made to question each other. This system may be used to advantage with the larger and better-instructed children, for the sake of varying the monotony of the ordinary recitation. The teacher must, however, be watchful to prevent any abuse from finding its way into it, that questions and answers be to the purpose, and that no mistake be left without correction. As a further precaution, he should not pit two against each other, between whom he knows that any coldness or ill-feeling exists: it might become the means of imbittering them still more.

## § 7. THE TEACHER'S MANNER.

The last qualification of the teacher to which attention is called, is his *manner*, when engaged in giving instruction. To be successful, it must be marked by certain characteristics. The most important truths, taught in a lifeless, uninteresting manner, will make little or no impression, while that which is of the least moment is made interesting by earnestness of manner in the speaker. The remarks of the actor are to the purpose, who, on being asked by an English prelate, "Why is an audience more deeply affected by the dramatic recitations of the stage, which are known to be fiction, than by the sublimest and gravest truths of religion, delivered from the pulpit by a consecrated minister?" replied: "We deliver fiction as if it were truth; you speak the truth as if it were fiction." The teacher should be deeply impressed with the conviction that his manner, when instructing, will have a great deal to do with securing the attendance, attention, interest, and progress of the children intrusted to his care.

1. The first characteristic of his manner should be *earnestness*. This is self-evident, and a few words in regard to it will suffice: "It is evident from the nature of the youthful heart," as a writer on this subject very justly remarks, "that, if a teacher would excite earnest feelings on the part of pupils, in reference to sacred things, that feeling must be deeply rooted in his own heart, and manifested in his outward manner.

Affected earnestness of manner will never impose upon young minds, but genuine earnestness will influence them mightily."* He should strive after such an earnestness as will enkindle, rather than damp, the ardor of the children. If he has well fixed on his mind a correct idea of the nature of the work he has undertaken to perform, and if this is united to an ardent affection for the children, and a thorough knowledge of child-nature, he will not be wanting in the right kind of earnestness.

2. The next characteristic should be *liveliness*, or *animation*. That teacher is greatly to be pitied who is so little acquainted with the peculiarities of children as to require them to sit for an hour motionless, with their little arms folded. He would find such a position very uncomfortable himself, even in his most serious mood. How unreasonable, then, to expect it from children of six or eight years! Let him, for the sake of experimenting, take as comfortable a position as he wishes in his own room, and sit motionless for ten minutes only, unless he finds it impossible to do so, and perhaps, being convinced of its difficulty, he will be more indulgent to the poor children. We talk of restlessness as one of their weaknesses. It is rather a necessity of their being. We cannot expect from them the gravity of age till they have the age to which that gravity belongs. They have much less in common with adults than is

* "How to Teach." By W. H. Groser, p. 140.

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generally supposed; indeed they have nothing in common, but the same nature.

If the teacher is possessed of wisdom, he will adapt himself to their condition, for in this lies the secret of his success. I have said, in another place, that his language should be vivid; his manner must be equally so. In this he must learn a lesson from the little ones before him. His voice, countenance, gesture, his whole being, must breathe animation, and the younger the children of his class, so much the more is this necessary. He needs not fear it will derogate from his dignity, or that of his subject. By becoming one with the children, he will win their affection, and become perfect master of their young hearts. Mr. Groser, quoted above, remarks on this subject: "Since to be cheerful and active is the very essence of life, those who appear to be so will secure youthful sympathy, and so prove attractive, while persons of a dull and heavy manner will seem as uninviting. Besides this, a teacher will generally have to cope with that common but unfortunate notion, so prevalent among young people, by which religion and religious ordinances are linked with ideas of gloom and sadness. To dispel such a misconception, he must resolutely endeavor to surround religion with everything cheerful, lively, and awakening; otherwise he will rivet the link instead of breaking it."*

3. It seems a truism to say that *patience* should impart its tone to the teacher's manner, since it is a

* "How to Teach," pp. 137, 138.

virtue possessed and practised by every sensible person, whether Christian or not. No one can hope to succeed in any calling without it, much less in one so difficult as that of the proper training of youth. Occasions of trying the teacher's patience will never be wanting, and if he fail to meet them in a spirit of meekness, he may compromise his dignity, and seriously weaken his influence with the class. It is an error, common to many, to imagine that a sharp word, an angry frown, or an impatient gesture, commands respect. It does not; and, besides, there are not wanting children who will find a malicious pleasure in trying the patience of one who they see is not above the reach of this temptation. Authority and respect are maintained by a grave deportment, a calm, unimpassioned rebuke, or, if need be, a chastisement, administered with no appearance of passion or resentment. They are not maintained by impatient outbreaks.

4. The teacher must also be *kind*. But, as this will not be wanting if he is animated with the sincere love for the children, which I shall next consider, I shall not stop to remark upon it. But the following observation from the pen of the learned Canon Oakley is so much to the purpose, that I cannot withhold it from the teacher, notwithstanding its length :

"The next requisite toward the success of all instruction addressed to the young is, that it should be conveyed with the utmost kindness and gentleness of disposition and manner. It is impossible to overrate

the importance of these qualities, not merely in their tendency to engage the affection and confidence of the children, but in the power which they exercise over their intellectual nature. Many a child of a timid and diffident character, who, by tender and considerate treatment, might have been encouraged to make the best use of his intellectual powers, has been paralyzed and stupefied by a harsh and overbearing manner on the part of his teacher. The preservation of a kind temper and conciliatory manner, under the temptations to which all teachers are exposed from the dulness of many a scholar, constitutes, of course, one of the greatest difficulties in the work of education. Still, it is this triumph of principle over nature which brings with it its earthly reward in that reciprocity of confidence which is the best guarantee for the success of his efforts.

"There are two great mistakes which we are apt to make in the treatment of poor children under education: The first is, to forget that they have feelings; and the second is, to forget that they have characters. It is a cruel error to imagine that those who are born in a lower condition of life, and are inured to the hardships of poverty, are devoid of those natural susceptibilities which we sometimes associate exclusively with the circumstances of birth and luxury. From such susceptibilities, indeed, as belong to an artificial state of society, the poorer and humbler classes, to their own advantage and happiness, are comparatively free. But

from such as are incidental to our common nature, they have no exemption. They do not like, any more than we, to be browbeaten, or sharply taken up with the ease and power which cleverness and readiness of speech can always assert over slowness and bashfulness. Again, as the children of the poor have their human sensibilities, so also have they their specialties of disposition and character. They require to be treated, not in the mass, but as individuals. The same treatment which will be meat to the proud and conceited, will be poison to the modest and timid." *

5. But, of all the characteristics of a proper manner, there is none so indispensable as a genuine *love* for the children and for the work of teaching. After all that has been said in the foregoing chapters of this work on the value of the human soul, it will not be difficult for the teacher to excite in his heart a sincere affection for the little ones committed to his care. If the innocence of the children will not enkindle his affection, what will be adequate to the task? Speaking on this subject, Mr. Groser says: "Most persons love children, and those who love them for Christ's sake love them the best and deepest of all. Let this affection be manifested, not repressed. Let it beam in every look, quiver in every tone, and glisten in every tear of sympathy and emotion; and whatever outward appearance may seem to indicate, that love will not be expended in vain. . . . A loving and earnest manner is, perhaps, the

* "The Priest on the Mission," Lecture V, No. 2.

mightiest of all the instruments which the teacher possesses within the limits of his own person and character."*

Treating of the same topic, the learned Abbé Dubois addresses catechists in these beautiful and touching words, so worthy of the subject, and so deserving the serious attention of teachers:—

"Do you wish to catechise with satisfaction, and with an almost infallible success? You must really love this divine ministry; if you do not love it naturally, pray God, by the intercession of Mary, to make you love it. And love the children also. Oh! love them tenderly in God and for God. You know whether Jesus loved them! They will love you if you love them. There will be no need of punishment, in order to compel their attendance! They will come of themselves; and if there be from their heart to yours a flood-tide of divine love, oh! what good catechisings you will give these children! We bestow our pains so willingly on those we love. We gladly submit to so much trouble, fatigue, and labor, to snatch from misfortune those who are dear to us. . . . Let your main point be kindness. Let it be known, without a suspicion of doubt, that you love your little flock, and that your greatest happiness is to be among them. Tell them often, and, better still, prove to them by your zeal for catechising, that your words are sincere. When you give a reproof, go as far as is necessary to

* "How to Teach," p. 141.

produce the effect you wish, but not one degree farther: and, even in giving this reproof, let it be seen that kindness is ever at the bottom of your heart, and that, if your severity has encroached slightly on your kindness, it has not dethroned or expelled it. . . . Do not rest contented with loving the children, but treat them also with a sort of affectionate respect, avoiding any excess of familiarity."*

The following extract from the works of Rev. Thos. J. Potter is equally to the purpose, and, although addressed to priests, is no less applicable to teachers of children in general:—

"'As if a nurse should cherish her children.' (1 Thess. ii, 7.) In these words St. Paul points out the first and most essential quality for succeeding in the instruction of children: a great spirit of sweetness, and an amiability of word, of manner, and of look, that may possess, in its measure and degree, the love of the mother for her offspring, of the nurse for the child committed to her care. We have already referred to the infinite condescension of our Divine Master and Model, in His intercourse with little children: 'And embracing them, and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them;' and the true priest of the Gospel will eagerly make his own, and vindicate to himself, the touching words of the devout Gerson, on this passage: 'O sweet Jesus! I am moved in the very depths of my soul when I see you stretch forth your arms, in order

* "Zeal in the Work of the Ministry," pp. 497-499.

to draw these little children with such infinite tenderness to your bosom. Yes; I desire to love those whom you have loved so dearly. I wish to imitate your goodness, and to feel for them, as you have done, the tenderness of a mother!' In these touching sentiments of the venerable author, we have the true secret of dealing with children. We must begin by gaining their hearts, and inspiring them with a great love for us. If they fear us, they will approach to our instruction with repugnance; they will absent themselves as frequently as possible; and, even when they attend, they will do so without interest, and only to avoid punishment. *Sweetness and gentleness of manner is the key to the heart of a child.* This attaches them to us, whilst rigor intimidates and repels them. A severe tone, a dark and sombre air, sharp or haughty manner, harsh, injurious, or ironical expressions, quickly and effectually estrange them from us, and cause them to lose all confidence in our teaching. Without, then, ever descending to familiarity, or losing sight of the fact that the sweetness so amiable and so becoming consists in a certain serenity of countenance, a grave and dignified affability, and a suavity of voice and manner, which insensibly gain all hearts, the instructor of children will ever strive to attach them truly and deeply to himself, that thus he may win them the more fully and completely to Jesus Christ." *

It would be superfluous to add more on a subject so

* "The Pastor and His People," pp. 220–222.

apparent to every one who is at all familiar with the workings of the human heart, and more especially the heart of a child. Let the teacher be convinced that "sweetness and gentleness of manner is the key to the heart of a child;" and, setting the example of our Divine Master before him, he will stand in no further need of incentives to kindness and love. He will feel his heart enkindle with a truly Christian affection for his little flock; and the ease and pleasure with which they will be seen to advance, will be the clearest evidence that he has adopted the proper manner of teaching.

6. The last characteristic of the good teacher's manner, and one of the most important and necessary, is *reverence*. The Council of Trent has, with good reason, declared that holy things should be treated with reverence. What more holy than the doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies, and pious practices of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself came upon earth to institute and proclaim, and upon the belief in, and practice of, which He has placed the eternal salvation or condemnation of the whole human race. The words of the council, it is true, are directed to those especially whose duty it is to minister at the altar; but if it is their province to consecrate and administer the sacraments, and perform the other sacred functions pertaining to their office, all is done in favor of those who have been prepared for a worthy participation in them by the teacher of Catechism. In vain will the priest perform his part, if the

people have not been prepared to perform theirs also, in a becoming manner.

If there was any period in the history of the Church in which it was more necessary to insist upon this reverence than at another, it is certainly the present. Attribute it to what cause you will,—whether it be the ignorance or neglect of parents or teachers, the spirit of indifference that pervades the very atmosphere, the light and prurient literature of the day, or the system of secular education, or the combined influence of all working on the minds of children,—the fact stares us boldly in the face, and cannot for a moment be called into question, that there is in many of our children and youth a most lamentable want of reverence for holy things. In the eyes of these there is nothing sacred; and it is with difficulty they are persuaded, or *forced*, to show due outward respect to the most holy mysteries of religion. We cannot longer close our eyes, and remain indifferent. A systematic and determined effort must be made to eradicate this lamentable evil, and the work is, in a great measure, in the hands of the Sunday-school teachers. They have the opportunity, the ability, and I would not do them the injustice to suppose them wanting in the good-will. Instruction must go before all, to enlighten the minds of the children to the true nature of holy things; faith must animate the knowledge thus acquired; but it is the reverence, in word and action, of the teacher that must act immediately on them, giving this reverential tone to their language and

conduct. I would not have him instruct so much by word as by example in this matter. The eye of the body in children sees more readily than the eye of the mind; and action leaves a deeper and more lasting impression than words. Not that inculcating reverence by precept is to be underestimated or neglected when opportunities offer; but example is the more powerful of the two, and the less obtrusive. Children, as well as adults, have an antipathy to being lectured on their neglect of duty; but in silence and alone they are apt to institute a comparison between their own conduct and that of a person whom they regard as a model, and the conclusion to which they come is commonly a just one.

It should be deeply impressed on the mind of the teacher, that he is not merely an *instructor*, but a *living model* for the class. The children will act, not as he tells them they should act, but as they see him act. They will copy his manner, whether he will or not, speak as they hear him speak, and do as they see him do; and this even unconsciously, so powerful is the force of example. To perform his duty faithfully, he should be reverent in his language and deportment. Here an objection may be urged that it is impossible to reconcile this advice with that which is enumerated, among the teacher's qualifications, *lively* or *animated* manner. But this contradiction is only apparent, not real. If both are genuine, there will be no difficulty in reconciling them together.

It is not in class only that this reverence should appear; it should attend the teacher in every pious exercise, whether it be prayer, hearing Mass, receiving the sacraments, or attending at any of the other devotions of the Church. There is nothing unreal or assumed in this: the works themselves demand it, and suppose the teacher to possess it; and I call his attention to it, because he may not be aware of the manner in which he is observed by the little ones. If he has not acquired the habit, he cannot expect to assume it successfully when in class, supposing, which no one can for a moment, that such a person would be fit to be intrusted with the religious training of the young. Children always observe closely the conduct of a teacher. The affection they bear him makes them feel proud to be able to speak a good word of him to the members of other classes; and in a variety of other ways will they show that his slightest motion does not escape their criticism. It is not unusual to hear them debate the relative merits of teachers, and carry home to their parents a favorable or an unfavorable account of them. These are truths which the teacher cannot afford to lose sight of, even if they related to matters that were no part of his duty, which they do not.

In class, his look should be grave, but not austere; his tone of voice pleasing, but subdued; and his bearing easy and affectionate, but without levity. But most of all should reverence appear in the language he

uses when treating of holy things. He should studiously avoid all irreverent, humorous, or jocose remarks. These, besides being in a high degree unbecoming, would be more readily remembered and repeated than would matters of a more serious character. The respect and influence he would lose by such remarks would be the least part of the evils that would flow from them. Let him remember that he is not appointed merely to enlighten the minds of the children, but to frame and mould their religious and moral character. They will carry to the grave much of the impression which his teaching and example make upon them.

But to be still more practical. In speaking of the sacraments and other holy things, he should use the adjectives *holy* or *sacred*, in connection with the name by which they are commonly designated among Christians. Thus he should say: the *Holy* Eucharist, the *Holy* Communion, the *Adorable* Sacrament of the Altar, the *Sacred* Host, the *Sacred* Passion, the *Sacred* Scripture, the *Holy* Names of Jesus and Mary, the *Blessed* Trinity, the *Holy* Guardian Angels; and so of the rest. He will hardly imagine the good effect the employment of these little words will have upon the habits of the children. But he must not be affected, or be anxious to draw the children's attention to his use of these qualifying terms. They will produce a much better effect without it. The Church, too, and whatever pertains to it, should be the object of

special reverence. The children should be made to feel that the reverence due to the sanctuary extends, in a measure, to its precincts; that is, to the sacristy, the basement of the church, the yard around it, etc. It is one of the best evidences of a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, to see boys raise their caps as they pass before the church, to see them unwilling to be boisterous near it, to hear them speak in subdued tones, etc. The teacher must not think light of these details. Our Divine Master has himself declared that "he that is faithful in that which is little, will be faithful also in that which is great."

Great reverence should especially be inculcated in teaching the children their prayers, and the manner of receiving the sacraments. It is lamentable to witness,—and priests and confessors witness it more than others,—how few, many of those who recite the Creed and the Acts, seem to have of the virtues which these beautiful prayers express; and how little, many youths who receive the sacraments frequently, appear to appreciate the importance of the acts they perform. A person who communicates with reluctance but once or twice in the year, frequently manifests far greater reverence than many of those do who receive this holy sacrament once in the month, or perhaps oftener. Whether this is a law of our frail nature, when left too much to its own resources, or a punishment sent from God upon the negligent, or, as is more probable, the

result of the combined influence of both, it is a lamentable evidence of the adage : "Familiarity begets contempt."

The good teacher will appreciate this evil at its real value, and will labor earnestly for its correction, being careful that what he enjoins upon others, is first and always illustrated by his own example. The united influence of both will work a reform in the conduct of the children that will be as consoling to him, as it is necessary for them, and becoming the great mysteries of religion.

# CHAPTER VII.

## The Duties of the Teacher, Relating Immediately to Himself.

The duties of the Sunday-school teacher are of such a nature as naturally to divide themselves into two classes: those which serve to fit him for the proper discharge of his office as teacher, and those which come into place when he is engaged in giving instruction. And first of the former of these:—

### § 1. SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

Among the duties of the person who would become a successful teacher, *self-improvement* holds the first place. Lessons from experience are necessary for perfection in every art. The most elaborate theories can go little further than to tell what is to be done, and lay down the general rules and principles for doing it. The application of these to individual cases necessarily depends upon a knowledge of the particular circumstances of the case. Theory puts the tools into our hands; practice gives dexterity in the use of them. Man is admirably adapted to the school of experience.

However unwilling he may be to acknowledge it, he is ever conscious of his ability to learn yet more, and is constantly acting on the feelings which that consciousness inspires. He learns without knowing it, and, it may be, without willing it: for, learn he must—it is a law of his nature. In connection with this, there is in most people a fund of ambition which is ever impelling them to aim at greater proficiency in their respective callings. The person who is willing to rest satisfied with his attainments in any department of knowledge, is greatly to be pitied. To this natural aptitude, and the ambition that spurs it on, is to be added, in the case of the Christian, a sense of duty which ever keeps before his mind his accountability to God, even should there be no superior in this world before whose tribunal he may be cited to give an account of the manner in which he discharges the duties of his calling or state of life.

A teacher has admirable opportunities for improvement. Unlike the mechanic, he has not to deal with inanimate things, that are always the same, or that vary according to fixed principles, which are readily known. His business is with minds as boundless as eternity, and as varied as they are numerous. Each of them is capable of teaching him a lesson that no one else could impart, or of varying his present knowledge in a manner not in the power of any other. Hence, after laboring to acquire the qualifications treated of in the foregoing chapter, the teacher will carefully study the character, dispositions, etc., of children in general;

what pleases or displeases them, what interests or disgusts them, what attracts or repels; all, in a word, that the closest observation is capable of affording: for a thorough knowledge of child-nature is essentially necessary to insure success in instructing. Besides this general knowledge, he should also study the peculiarities of the children that constitute his class. It will be equally advantageous to him to examine himself seriously from time to time, to discover where there may still be room for improvement, in what that improvement should consist, and how he may best be able to secure it. He must place his standard high, and aim at absolute perfection. The following remarks of Mr. J. S. C. Abbott should be the rule for the Sunday-school teacher, if for any one in the world: "Aim at the highest possible excellence in whatever calling you are now engaged. Read the biography of almost any successful man, and you will find that this has been the great secret of his success. Begin immediately, just where you are, and devote all your energies, your zeal, your fidelity, to the attainment of the highest possible excellence."

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### § 2. AN ARDENT DESIRE OF ADVANCING THE CHILDREN.

The next duty of the teacher is the cultivation of an ardent desire for the advancement of his pupils. The measure of his exertions will correspond to the measure

of this desire. It is in the nature of man to require a compensation of some sort for his labor, be it money, fame, honor or pleasure. He will not put forth his energies without a reward. The last of these is the only temporal reward at which the Sunday-school teacher is permitted to aim, and in this he is rather fortunate than otherwise; for, what is done from a motive of love, is generally well done. The love, too, which prompts him is of the noblest kind; for it is either the pure love of God, or affection for the children, which is a love of the perfections of the Creator, reflected in the innocence and simplicity of childhood. To instruct the children is to enable them to preserve, or, if lost, to regain, the innocence bestowed upon them by their Creator.

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### § 3. THE PREPARATION OF THE LESSON.

A further duty of the teacher is the preparation of the lesson. If he is at all desirous of making his instructions a source of pleasure to himself and of profit to the children, he will never venture into their presence without a deeper and more thorough knowledge, not only of the Christian Doctrine in general, but also of that particular day's lesson, than all the members of the class should be expected to possess, when they have finished the recitation. He should know what words, phrases, doctrines, etc., require ex-

planation, and how they are to be explained, following, in this, the instructions to be found further on, in the chapter treating of Explanation. He must, in a word, prepare himself to teach the children, according to their capacity, all that is contained in the lesson, or that rises naturally out of it. In order to do this, his preparation must be *accurate* and *abundant*. Discoursing on this subject, Mr. Fitch says: "No man can ever teach all that he knows on any subject. I doubt, indeed, whether he can teach half of what he knows. If you would be a good teacher, therefore, up to a certain point, you yourself should have gone far beyond that point. If any teacher is only barely provided with the knowledge actually required for his class, he is sure to fail, both in securing attention, and in getting the subject understood. Children will always carry away with them far less than you bring. Make up your mind at once to the fact that a large discount or percentage of even a successful lesson is always lost in the very act of communicating it. Therefore, if you wish children to receive a given amount of instruction, you must be provided with a great deal more. I have always noticed, when a man is teaching, that the moment he gets within sight of the horizon, and feels that he is approaching the limits of his own knowledge, he falters, he becomes embarrassed, he loses confidence in himself, the children soon detect his weakness, and the lesson loses interest immediately.

"Now the practical inference from this is: Get

all the subsidiary and illustrative information you can possibly accumulate about your lesson before you give it." *

The teacher must, however, be on his guard in the selection of anecdotes for illustrating the lesson, and must not take any of those found in the Catholic School-Readers, because the children are more familiar with them than he is. Should he unconsciously do so, he might be caught up, as I once was when a student and superintendent of the Sunday-school in the parish in which the seminary stood. Having, by the advice of the pastor, to address the children at the close of the recitation, and knowing how difficult it would be to secure their attention when they were expecting to be dismissed instead of lectured, I thought it necessary to begin with an anecdote. After some reflection one was remembered which I had learned, I knew not when nor where, but which I deemed suitable for the occasion. But what was my surprise and humiliation, when, having repeated hardly a dozen words, a small boy in front of me sprung to his feet and cried out: "*Teacher, that's all in the Second Reader!*"

There is no other book in English that will furnish so rich and varied a collection of religious anecdotes as "The Furniss Tracts,"—a small volume from the pen of Father Furniss, a celebrated English priest, and instructor of the young. If the teacher is familiar with the German language, he will be able to find in it a

* "The Art of Securing Attention," pp. 10, 11.

number of works abounding in illustrations and anecdotes.

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### § 4. PUNCTUALITY IN ATTENDING.

The teacher should also be punctual in attending, and should always be in the room with the children before the time for beginning the recitation. At no other time do his class and the entire school stand so much in need of his presence as at the moment of calling to order. Should it be impossible, as it sometimes may be, for him to attend, he should notify the superintendent, when it can be done, and, with his consent, employ a substitute to teach in his absence. Nothing disturbs the good order that should reign in the school so much as leaving the class even for a short time without a teacher.

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### § 5. KEEPING THE CLASS-BOOK.

He should also keep such an account of the attendance, deportment, progress, etc., of the children as the pastor or superintendent may require, and should give him such other information regarding them as may be deemed advantageous for securing the success of the class and the school. He should not, however, speak in a tone of reproach or impatient complaint, but

openly and candidly state what may be thought useful or necessary; and if the information be of such a nature as to permit him to give it in presence of the children, there is no place more appropriate. There may be some persons of a different opinion; but, with the restriction placed above, and the further condition that the child or children about whom the information is to be given, be present, I shall insist upon what has been advanced. I have treated at length of the love which the teacher should have for the members of his class; and it can seldom appear to better advantage than when he has a complaint to make, supposing, which can never be the case, that all his communications to the superintendent be of that kind. If he truly loves the children, he can say almost anything of them in their presence with far more effect than could be expected in their absence. He should not, however, be too fond of carrying news to the superintendent. When I see a teacher constantly complaining of his class, I confess I am more inclined to lay the blame to his charge, than to that of the children.

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### § 6. PRAYING FOR THE CHILDREN.

Finally, the teacher should pray for the children. The work in which he is engaged is the work of God, and it is needless to say that only with the divine assist-

ance can he hope to perform it in a becoming manner. I should especially recommend to him the cultivation of a tender devotion to the holy guardian angels of the children. He is a visible agent in the work which they are invisibly performing ; and the more intimately he is united with them, the greater will be his success. We cannot for a moment suppose that those blessed spirits look with indifference upon the work of enlightening the young minds in the knowledge of God and His holy law ; on the contrary, we have every reason to believe that nothing could be capable of exciting their interest, if it were possible, yet more than it is already excited in behalf of the children. Leaving this, with these remarks, to the promptings of the zeal which has already led the teacher to undertake the instruction of the young, I shall pass on to the next chapter.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## Duties of the Teacher Relating Immediately to the Children.

### § 1. THE SECURING OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE.

It is not my intention to discuss in this place what relates to the recitation,—that will be made the subject of a separate chapter,—but rather to point out those duties which serve to fit the children for the profitable study of the Catechism. And first among these must be placed the securing of regular and punctual attendance. To instruct with satisfaction and profit, the teacher must have the children in class every Sunday, and during the whole time allotted to the recitation. The reasons that induce me to place this among the duties of the teacher may not at first be clear to every one, but a moment's reflection cannot fail to convince him that he has a greater part to perform in securing attendance than he is generally supposed to have. Children are induced by one of two motives to attend Sunday-school. They are either attracted or forced to it. Having no coercive means at his command, it is not in the power of the teacher to employ force. He may, indeed, complain to the pastor or superintendent, and he, or a member of the visiting committee, if there be one, may seek

out the truant, and bring him into class. But if he depends upon this, it must be repeated every Sunday; and the presence of the child, secured by such means, will be agreeable to no one, while his progress, if any, will be tardy and discouraging. Coercive means must be resorted to, on rare occasions, with certain children; for, otherwise, it would be impossible to secure their attendance. But such means are not in the hands of the teacher. A more powerful one, however, is within his reach. When the delinquent is brought into class by the proper authority, it is in his power, and it is his duty, to employ the means of securing attendance in future which are at his command, and which are more irresistible than any other. He can attach the child to himself, and thus attract him to the school. I am not ignorant of the objection which some will, doubtless, make, that not a few children have been so utterly neglected, and have so wayward a disposition, that it is impossible to awaken a generous impulse in their hearts.

Many years of teaching, and of intercourse with children in every walk of life, have not left me ignorant of their nature and defects. But with this, I have also learned that there is no being so depraved, or with heart so callous, from ignorance or neglect, as not to retain some vestige of the image of the Creator stamped upon his soul. There are tender chords in every heart which will awake to life, if touched by a skilful hand; and the very fact that the cultivation of his affections has been

neglected, will make them all the more powerful, when once awakened into life. The teacher who sincerely loves the children possesses a power over them which they cannot resist when they have learned its depth, as they soon will. There is no child so affectionate to a teacher as the one that has been neglected or treated harshly at home. There is a fund of affection in the heart of every human being, that longs for an object upon which to pour itself out; and that object will be the person, whether parent or teacher, that reciprocates his love. In the case of these unfortunate little ones, the love which should have been divided among many, is reserved for the teacher; and if he is kind, the child will be perfectly under his control. I have never known children more affectionate than those orphans were, with whom I was placed for a considerable time. I could hardly appear among them without being surrounded in a moment, and pressed in such a manner, as hardly to be able to move about. Their affection was beyond their control. And why? Because, by the death or neglect of parents, it had long been pent up without an object upon which to expend itself, and having found one, it rushed forth with all the impetuosity of a mountain torrent. This is the teacher's means of securing attendance. Let him love the children ardently, and show it by the zeal with which he labors for their advancement, and they will attend. He must bring the conviction home to their minds that, by absenting themselves, they grieve him, and lose

an opportunity of learning something that is worth knowing; in a word, that they will suffer in knowledge and in happiness—and they will attend, and count it a privilege.

Granting, however, that one or two may be found to absent themselves at intervals, what is to be done when they do appear in class? The teacher cannot remain indifferent, but he should not scold. Of all the means of securing attendance, this is the very worst. Would that it were not so common! There is nothing else on earth so distasteful to a child; nothing for which he entertains so utter an aversion. The infliction of a corporal punishment is generally preferable to a scolding. The child has absented himself from class, because he expected to find more pleasure elsewhere. And would he, think you, be induced to attend by your making the exercises of the class yet more distasteful to him? The fact is, we have not learned the power of kindness over the young heart, and vainly imagine it would be thrown away on the tattered clothes and dirty faces of the children around us. If the love and kindness of Christ, our Model, were in us, we should attract the little ones to us as He did to Himself. When the prodigal returns, he should be kindly received, the cause of his absence should be inquired into, and the weakness of his excuses, and the necessity of his regular attendance, both for his own sake and for that of the teacher and the class, laid before him. He should not be taught to expect a bitter reproach: the

confession of his fault in the presence of the class is a sufficient humiliation. The kindness of the teacher should not be lessened ; on the contrary, it should be increased. If this will not secure his attendance, there is nothing under the sun that will, unless it be taking him by the ears every Sunday, and leading him into the class : and it is not in the power of the teacher to do this, nor is it his province. He may, however, visit the child during the week, and employ such arguments as he may deem suitable under the circumstances, to secure his regular attendance in future. But on such occasions he must not for a moment lose sight of the respect due to the child and his parents, nor forget that his most convincing argument is kindness of manner and language. Kindness is never employed in vain ; and he who resorts to it never commits an error, nor prepares a subject for future regret. I have insisted, at considerable length, upon this point, both because of the necessity of regular attendance on the part of the children, and also because of the errors sometimes committed by teachers in trying to secure it. All that I have said upon the subject can be reduced to this : The children should be *drawn*, not *forced*, into the Sunday-school.

## § 2. THE MAINTAINING OF GOOD ORDER.

In the second place, it is the duty of the teacher to preserve good order. No arguments are needed to convince every one of the importance of this. If I have insisted on the teacher acting on the better nature of the children, when treating of attendance, I shall do the same on the present topic. We should not be at pains to cultivate weeds; they will grow far too abundantly without care. He should study at all times to cultivate and develop whatever is noble in the minds and hearts of the children, and, as far as possible, ignore what is perverse, or has been perverted. Children should be taught to act from the promptings of their better nature, not from those of passion or caprice. Their faults should not be kept constantly before their eyes,—an error too frequently committed,—but they should be made to feel that these are blemishes upon one's character, introduced from without, and not inherent in nature. They will then become ashamed of them, regard them as intruders, and try to eradicate them. *No child has ever been corrected of a fault, or ever will be corrected, by having it thrust constantly in his face.* He will become either discouraged or desperate, and in neither case is there left hope of his reformation. It is a sad mistake to make a child feel that there is nothing good in him. On the other hand, a child is never too young to value what he sees others esteem in his character. I am not counselling flattery.

Between discouragement and flattery there is a wide and fruitful field for the display of the teacher's prudence. If, then, he would make the most of whatever good he finds in the child,—and he will always be able to find something,—remembering at the same time that he is training him not for this world, but for God, the child will also be induced to esteem the same good. If the teacher appeals to it, the child will recognize the force of the appeal; and if he is ashamed of the child's vices. he, too, will soon become ashamed of them, and will try to correct them.

Children will preserve order in class, either because they fear the authority of the teacher, or because they respect themselves and him, and are unwilling to give him pain, by acting in such a manner as would lower themselves in his estimation. Classes are composed for the most part of so small a number, that but little difficulty should be experienced in preserving order. Having laid down the principle upon which its preservation depends, a few rules will now be given to the teacher.

Mr. Hart, writing on this subject, remarks: "The first step toward the maintenance of order is for the teacher to make up his mind that the thing must be done. . . . Let every teacher understand that, in this thing, aiming at the end is half the road toward reaching it. The first rule for keeping order is: resolve that you will have it. Fix it definitely in your mind, as a thing to be done by some means; then resolve in your

mind what those means shall be. . . . This rule must be real. But it need not be harsh. It need not be ostentatious. The less show of government, so there really is government, the better. Let the teacher, even when he has to resort to what almost amounts to restraint, be as gentle about it, and make as little show of it, as possible. You may give a command without putting it in the imperative mood. 'Will you please?' has the form of a request; and when the boy does please, he seems to be doing a favor: and yet there has been a real putting forth of authority on the one side, and a yielding of obedience on the other. Remember, too, that the forms of politeness always inspire the children with respect. . . . The power to govern children does not come by delegation. Scholars mind you, if at all, not because the superintendent or their parents have told them they must mind you, *but because it is in you to be minded.* This power over children is a personal attribute, inherent, incommunicable. The first element in it is a strong will. You must resolutely determine to carry your point. The next element in importance is a persuasive manner; and the best way to bring about this persuasive manner is to cultivate a love for children in your heart." *

If the teacher, then, wishes to keep the class in order, he must begin by keeping himself in order. He enjoys no exemption. Unbecoming levity of manner or conversation, as well as bursts of passion, under-

* "The Sunday-School Idea," pp. 139-41.

mines his authority. Paradoxical as it may appear, there is nothing weaker than anger; nothing stronger than gentleness. The teacher's authority is like his coat: the oftener he wears it, the sooner it will become threadbare; and the greater the storm in which it appears, the more is it likely to be injured. Again, he must remain always in the presence of his class, and in such a position as to have all the children constantly under his eye. The eye, not the voice, is the instrument of good order. Whenever children are tempted to misbehave, they look at the teacher, either immediately before, to see if he is looking, or immediately after, to see if he has observed them, and to mark the effect their conduct has produced. If he is expert, he will generally be able to meet their glance with his, and the result will be that he will arrest them, and maintain good order, without uttering a word. Children soon become ashamed of being always caught, and instinctively reform their conduct. This is well worth the teacher's remembering. Impatient exclamations, or calling offenders by harsh names, should be carefully avoided, because it is ungentlemanly and unchristian, and because it aggravates the child and distracts the entire class. Yet we sometimes hear such exclamations as these: "Jim, keep quiet;" "Pat, you're talking again;" "Joe, you're the worst boy in class," etc. The teacher should, further, keep the children at their seats, and usefully employed. Idleness invites to distraction and mischief.

But there are wayward dispositions sometimes to be met, that will disturb the good order of the class, and will resist, or become stubborn, when forced to keep good order. How are these to be treated? The teacher is not to manifest any signs of perplexity or annoyance, but should, after having asserted his authority, and restored the discipline of the class by the gentlest means available under the circumstances, permit the heated passion to cool and subside, for want of further opportunity of displaying itself. This done, he will seize a favorable moment for bringing the child to a sense of the disgracefulness of his conduct, which, if it can be done indirectly, by developing some point in the day's lesson, will be all the better. The motives for repentance and amendment will then be ennobled, and the child made to feel that he has acted in a manner unbecoming a member of the class, and, what is much more important, unworthy of a child of God.

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### § 3. THE SECURING OF ATTENTION.

The next duty of the teacher is that of securing *attention*. It is difficult to give any rules by the observance or enforcement of which this end may be attained, since it is not so much a *qualification* of a good teacher, as it is an evidence that he possesses all the qualifications, both natural and acquired, of a good teacher. It is rather the *result* of good teaching, than a *condition*

thereto ; yet it is, at the same time, a condition essential to success.

Many influences act upon the children to prevent them from paying strict attention to the exercises of the class, the principal of which is the difficulty of keeping the mind fixed upon religious subjects, which, being of an abstract nature, do not appeal with sufficient force to the uncultivated mind, to arrest and rivet its attention. Before attempting to show how attention may be secured and maintained, it is necessary to correct an erroneous impression, too common among teachers. "Let me tell you first," says Mr. Fitch, "how you will *not* get attention : You will not get it by claiming it, by demanding it as a right, or by entreating it as a favor ; by urging upon your pupils the importance of the subject, the sacredness of the day, the kindness of their teachers, or the great and solemn character of the truth you have to impart. All these are very legitimate arguments to use to older Christians. You and I, we may hope, feel their force. The sense of these things keeps us thoughtful and silent many a time, perhaps, when we are hearing a dull or unintelligible address. We feel we *ought* to be attentive, and we make an effort to be so. This is a very valid argument to us, no doubt, but it is no argument to a child. Nothing iu the long run, except fear,—which I know you would feel to be a very unsatisfactory motive,—can keep a child's attention fixed, but a sense of real interest in the thing you are saying. It is necessary that you should feel that the subject

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claims attention for itself, not that you are claiming attention for the subject. Depend upon it, that attention got by threats, by authority, or even by promises, or indeed by any external means whatever, is not a genuine or effective thing. The real attention, such as alone can serve the purpose of a Sunday-school teacher, must be founded on the fact that you have got something to say which is worth the child's hearing, and that you can say it in such a manner that he shall feel it to be worth his hearing."* This last sentence contains the whole secret of securing attention, in so far as it is an act of the will.

Two conditions are required for securing attention: the body must be in a comfortable position, and the mind must be interested. The teacher cannot reasonably expect the children, especially if they are small, to sit motionless for an hour or more, and attend to his instruction: it is physically impossible for them to do so. On this head Mr. Fitch remarks: "Children need *change of posture.* The restlessness which we often complain of in children is not a fault; it is a constitutional necessity. It is positively painful to them to remain in one attitude long. We ought to be aware of this; and occasionally, when attention seems to flag, let the whole class stand for a short time, or go through some simple exercise, which requires movement. You will often find that in this way your class will be refreshed. When the body has had its

* "The Art of Securing Attention," pp. 7, 8.

lawful claims recognized, the mind will be more at leisure to devote itself to the lesson; the sense of weariness will disappear, and the work of teaching proceed with more cheerfulness." *

The teacher having secured this first condition, which, after all, presents no great difficulty, will find all else reduced to the single point of interesting the class in the recitation. If he is capable of this, he has their attention; if not, it is in vain that he would resort to authority, or appeal to their sense of duty: the fault is not in them, but in himself. Let him, then, bear in mind that attention is *an act of the will*, and as such is under the control of the child, if he possesses the ability to present the lesson in such a manner as to cause the will to prefer it to all else. It is also a *habit*, and will become easier every day, if it be claimed and arrested from the beginning. But, on the other hand, every day the child listens languidly to a lesson, the habit of inattention acquires a stronger hold upon him.

The first requisite for exciting interest is, as has been said, to be accurately and abundantly prepared with explanations for difficulties, anecdotes from the Sacred Scripture, and the Lives of the Saints, etc. No teacher, as we have said, can impart to others all the information he possesses on a given subject; and the moment he begins to approach the limit of his ability, he will betray his weakness to the class, and

* "The Art of Securing Attention," p. 14.

attention is, in a measure, gone. He should also study to vary his mode of teaching, no matter how near perfection he may seem to have attained, for the expectation of something new in the future, by the children, will keep them the better alive to what is transpiring in the present. In this manner curiosity is awakened, and curiosity is the parent of attention. For the rest, the teacher is referred to what has been said in this and the last chapter, and what remains to be said on questioning, explaining, and conducting the recitation. Indeed, the question of securing attention is so dependent upon exciting interest, that I am forced to end where I began, and, like Demosthenes, who, on being asked in what oratory consisted, is said to have replied, "In three things, of which the first is *action*, the second is *action*, and the third is *action*," would I answer, that securing attention, the most indispensable of all the requisites of a Sunday-school, depends upon three conditions, of which the first, second, and third, are: *interest the children in the lesson*, and the livelier the interest, the more profound will be the attention.

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### § 4. INSPIRING THE CHILDREN WITH A LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE.

The teacher should, in the next place, study to foster and increase in the minds of the children a love of

knowledge. It is not created by artificial means, but is innate in man from his cradle. The teacher, however, can and should stimulate it, and give it the proper direction, and this for two reasons: In the first place, he will greatly facilitate the child in acquiring, and himself in imparting, knowledge. "The desire of knowledge," says a writer on education, "is one of the noblest incentives to study. A pupil who craves knowledge, for its own sake, will find a prize in every truth learned. He will not need the spur of position or emulation to prompt him to exertion; and fear of punishment, shame, and ridicule, are for influencing other natures than his. Even the approbation of teachers, friends, and society, is enjoyed by him more as the reward of his efforts, than as the end for which his learning was sought. Simply to possess knowledge, gives pleasure. The mental appetite is thus satisfied." *

The second reason why the teacher should foster the love of knowledge is, that nothing will conduce so powerfully toward retaining the young man or woman in the path of duty, as present knowledge, and a constant longing to increase it. When, in the ordinary course of events, these children become the heads of families, they will know how to train up their own little ones in the proper manner. Nothing tends so powerfully to lead Christians, especially those approaching the age of maturity, from the path of duty and honor, and, it may be, from the faith, as their ignorance of what is

* "School Economy," J. P. Wickersham, A. M., p. 156.

required of them as Christians, and the satisfaction they feel in remaining in that ignorance. Their knowledge of duty does not, as with the instructed, act as a constant stimulant, urging its performance. The words of Pope Benedict XIV contain a terrible truth, and one worthy of our most serious attention: "We affirm," says this learned pontiff, "that the greatest part of the damned are in hell, because they did not know those mysteries of faith which Christians must know and believe." * What wonder if, when such persons become the heads of families, their indifference and neglect should become, in their children, little less than downright infidelity? The teacher who performs his duty faithfully is a benefactor, not of the present generation only, but also of generations yet unborn.

How is he to foster and increase this love of knowledge in the children? He is to do so in general, by doing all in his power to make the exercises of the Sunday-school agreeable to them; and especially, by explaining and illustrating the lessons in a manner so clear and attractive as to convince them that religious knowledge is worth desiring and possessing. It depends at present upon the interest which the children are made to feel in the exercise; and this, although a general rule, is the only one that can be given. Direct arguments may be used to advantage with the older children; but even they, I am convinced, will be actuated more by interest than by a sense of duty. It

* "Institutiones," XXVII, No. 28.

is also greatly promoted by encouraging the children to ask questions. There is no means of exciting curiosity so ready or so natural as that of question and answer. But when questions are asked, it matters not how irrelevant they are, they should always be answered in a kindly tone of voice, and the child should be made to feel that it affords the teacher a pleasure to clear up his little difficulties.

A sharp reply, or the betrayal of mirth at the simplicity of the child's inquiry, may seal his lips forever in class. If the teacher has attentively studied child-nature, he will have learned that, what is the merest trifle to a man, may present great difficulties to a child ; and, at most, what harm can there be in a simple question if, by a respectful reply, the confidence of the interrogator is strengthened? For further remarks on this subject, the teacher is referred to the chapter on the art of questioning.

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### § 5. THE CULTIVATING OF THE MEMORY, AND THE STUDYING OF THE LESSON.

The teacher must also cultivate the memory of the children. As the adage has it, "There is no royal road to knowledge." It must come by incessant labor; and, in the acquisition of it, the memory plays a most important part. There is, perhaps, no limit to the retentive capacity of memory, if knowledge be properly

deposited therein; but, like all the intellectual faculties, it must be trained, and its power developed. It is weakened either by neglecting it, or by *cramming* it. The memory is the storehouse of the mind, without which it would be useless, and a waste of time, to labor for the acquisition of knowledge.

The cultivation of this faculty in the children is absolutely necessary for the teacher of Catechism ; for, without it, he cannot perform his duties in the proper manner, nor with that pleasure which makes the work of instruction agreeable. If he is certain that no more than a transient impression will be made on the memory of the children, he cannot feel encouraged to labor with zeal for their advancement.

But it is far more necessary for them. They are acquiring a fund of religious knowledge that is to be the guide and law of their lives. Their memory, if properly cultivated, will gain strength, and, retaining what is confided to it in the present, will crave for an increase of knowledge in the future ; and calling it up and ruminating upon it will impress it more indelibly, giving it a more definite power in regulating their conduct. But, if neglected, it will grow weak, and refuse to retain even those necessary truths upon which eternity itself depends.

Strange as it may appear, teachers themselves not unfrequently do much to weaken the memory of the children. This is done *indirectly*, by permitting them to attend class, Sunday after Sunday, without their

having committed the lesson to memory, and by not insisting on their doing so; and *directly*, by reading for the children such parts of the lesson as they have failed or neglected to learn. Nothing can be more detrimental. It destroys not only the will, but also the ability, to learn. What child will be at pains to study the lesson if he is confident that his neglect will be promptly supplied by the reading of a too indulgent teacher? Yet teachers are strongly tempted to act in this manner, it being so much easier to read the lesson and have done, than it is to chide or encourage the children, when they hesitate, or answer imperfectly. But such an imprudent teacher is an enemy to the true interests of both himself and the children. He will be forced to witness his class go through the book, and carry away with them the faintest idea only of what it contains: a circumstance that must be painful and humiliating to one whose only temporal reward is to be found in the progress of the children confided to his care. In the study of the lesson, the rule for the teacher must be: *never do for the children what they are able, with reasonable diligence, to do for themselves.* Show them *how* to study the lesson, and then insist upon their doing so. Insist kindly, but firmly, and bring forward such arguments as will act upon their better nature. Do not help them to study, but be careful to explain well what they *have studied.* The following remarks of Prof. Wickersham are to the purpose: "A scholar was never made by depending

upon others. Self-work is the necessary condition of self-advancement. Every time a pupil receives assistance which, by his own exertions, he might have dispensed with, he loses an opportunity of strengthening himself: he does worse, for he will thus learn to depend upon others. One person might as well expect another to appease his hunger, by eating for him, as to enable him to think, by doing his thinking. The tendency of our teaching is to explain, illustrate, and simplify too much; and thus we fail to inure our pupils to that sturdy self-reliance which loves to test its strength, by striving to do hard things."*

But how is memory to be cultivated? It depends upon certain conditions, the first of which is the assigning of a suitable lesson. In doing this, the teacher should not exact too much from the children; nor should he be too indulgent. Some difficulty will be experienced in regulating the length of the lesson, but he should not be influenced by the division of lessons found in the Catechism. These are dictated rather by the nature of the subjects treated, than by a desire of adopting the divisions to the capacity of ordinary children. And granting that a child should be able to study one lesson a week, as they are set off, the teacher is free. He has the good of the children, most of all, at heart, and should consult for it. No class is composed of children of equal talent; and what would be a short lesson for some children, might prove a very long

* "School Economy," p. 172.

one for others. For this reason he must not be guided by the ability of the most intelligent; neither, on the other hand, must he take the capacity of the least gifted member as his criterion. While the former may be profitably entertained by the explanation given on the lesson, the others should be made to employ all the talent that nature has given them. There may, however, be found one or two who are not able to keep pace with the others. The teacher cannot retard the class on their account, but must make what he can of them. It will then be found most advantageous to regulate the length of the lesson by the capacity of those of moderate ability, the length to be gradually increased, if necessary, as the memory of the children is found to become more retentive. In general, however, it is much better to assign short than long lessons. The former are more easily retained in the memory, and may be more fully explained; time is afforded for reviewing past lessons, and the interest of the class is more easily sustained. But with the latter, the children are hurried through the Catechism, without being able to understand and retain what has been learned; and, as a natural consequence, they must give the book a second perusal, which is well known to be both distasteful and discouraging, affording little profit to the children, and less pleasure to the teacher. But, whatever be the length of the lesson, *it should be entirely committed to memory by the class*, except by the chance one who may not possibly be able to do so; and even he must be urged to do all in his

power. Says the Abbé Dubois : "Make all your children learn the text of the Catechism ; it is a matter far more important than is generally supposed. It is even necessary to insist, as much as possible, upon their knowing all the lessons of the Catechism, so as to be able to recite them with steadiness, and almost without a mistake. It is thus engraven on their memory ; and if, as children, they recite lessons mechanically, and without reflection, at a later period it will be otherwise : aided by reason, they will dwell all the more on a crowd of doctrinal points, which are called to mind by the long passages of the Catechism never yet forgotten. Never forget this important recommendation."*

Then let the teacher explain the lesson thoroughly in the manner I shall indicate in the chapter on that subject; for children will not be interested in remembering, and will not remember what they do not fully understand. This explanation will also serve to keep up the connection between the different lessons, to unfold the progressive development of doctrine, to excite curiosity, and to make the work of the memory more easy and agreeable.

Besides assigning a suitable lesson, the teacher should instruct the children in the best manner of committing it to memory. It is not uncommon to meet with children who spend time enough on the lesson to become master of it, and yet are, in the end, partially ignorant of it. This is a waste of time, is very dis-

*"Zeal in the Work of the Ministry," pp. 499, 500.

couraging, and produces a bad habit. The lesson cannot be studied as a whole, but must be taken piecemeal. *Children will never learn a lesson by reading it over repeatedly.* The teacher should impress this upon their minds, and then teach them the proper manner of studying. But, first, it will greatly aid the children if, after the recitation of the day's lesson, he gives an idea of the matter of the next Sunday's lesson, and shows its connection with what has gone before. The manner in which he is to do this, will be found in the chapter on explanation.

As to the best manner of committing the lesson to memory, different persons follow different methods. Some would have the lesson divided into a number of parts, and the days of the week divided in the same manner, assigning to each division of time a corresponding portion of the lesson. This method has much to recommend it, because the children must not imagine for a moment that the study of the lesson is to be deferred to Saturday or Sunday. The earlier in the week it is begun, the better; and the longer the time that elapses between the committing of it to memory and the recitation, the more indelibly will it be imprinted there. The plan which I have generally advocated differs a little from this. I would have the children read the lesson once or twice through, so as to have a fair idea of what it contains. Beginning, then, with the first answer, they should commit it to memory; passing to the second, they should treat it in the same manner, and

repeat both, going on to the third, and so on, always repeating at least three answers. This frequent repetition makes it almost impossible to forget what has been learned. I do not, of course, mean that the entire lesson should be learned at one time, but that it should be treated in the same manner every time the child returns to it. Where there are two or more children of the same family, the teacher should urge them to assist one another, and show them how to do so. If I were writing exclusively for parents, I should show that teaching children is the mother's work, which no one can perform so successfully as she. The zealous teacher will think nothing beneath his notice that will assist the children in accomplishing what, to them, is a difficult work; on the contrary, he will feel, and *show*, an ardent desire of helping them in every way possible. It will also be a great inducement to them to retain the lesson in memory, if he always asks a few questions, at the beginning of recitation, on the lesson of the previous Sunday. As regards the smaller children, who are not able to read, the teacher is referred to the second chapter on the manner of conducting the recitation.

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### § 6. THE WHOLE TIME OF RECITATION TO BE SPENT WITH THE CLASS.

Another of the teacher's duties is that of spending the whole time set apart for recitation with the class in

hearing the lesson, and explaining the difficulties arising out of it. I shall have occasion to return to this subject in the following chapter, and for the present will merely say that it is his duty, and for this he has been employed. Besides, a lesson must be very short and meagre in details, that will not afford sufficient matter to engage the class for an hour. The best teachers always find the time allotted to the recitation far too short to permit them to explain the lesson as they would wish, and as they feel it their duty to explain it. The erroneous idea that children grow tired of an uninterrupted recitation, will be refuted in its proper place. They become far more weary if forced to preserve order, when idle, than when entertained with useful explanations and appropriate questions.

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### § 7. FORMING THE CHILDREN TO REGULARITY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

The teacher should do all in his power to form in the children the habit of night and morning prayers, and regular attendance at Mass on days of obligation, asking them from time to time whether they have been faithful in the performance of these sacred duties, or not. In case he finds them negligent, he should use such means as will bring about a reformation of their conduct. With reference to assisting at Mass, he should look upon it as a duty to inform the pastor or the

superintendent, that he may secure the fulfilment of so binding an obligation. But in this, and in all else, he must never reflect upon the neglect or indifference of parents, however culpable they may evidently be, under the circumstances ; it would tend to lessen the children's respect for them. On the contrary, he should labor to increase and strengthen filial confidence and respect. In this manner he will be able to act indirectly on the parents themselves, for the children will repeat at home much of what they hear in class. In what relates to the frequentation of the sacraments, he need do little more than speak in general terms of the advantage of their frequent and worthy reception, when teaching those parts of the Catechism which treat of them. It is but natural to suppose that, in a matter of such vital importance, the pastor will leave nothing undone that could contribute to the welfare of this portion of his flock. Still, if he is aware that a child is negligent in this particular, and has reason to believe that it has escaped the pastor's notice, it is his duty to inform him ; or, if a particular day has been set apart for hearing the confessions of such as have not yet received their first communion, and he knows that a child has not complied with the pastor's order, he should again speak. But I would not permit the teacher to question the children on these matters. It is an abuse which degrades the child's motive for receiving these sacraments, and may, perhaps, make him go so far as sometimes to receive them without proper dispositions. Parents and pastors,

but no others, should speak of these matters. The prudent teacher will even be at pains to give the suspicious child, should there be any such, to understand that he is perfectly free; and this is a topic upon which he should speak to no one in presence of the class. Apart, let him act as the spiritual welfare of the children seems to demand, remembering that a vein of true Christian charity must pervade all.

Finally, there are circumstances to which no general rules or recommendations will apply, and in which the teacher must consult his own experience and judgment. In doing so, it will aid him greatly if he remembers that he is not instructing the children for to-day, but is furnishing them with a guide for life, and a criterion for their final judgment. He will, then, do all in his power, so far as lies within the legitimate sphere of his duty, to promote their spiritual welfare, and his zeal, guided by his knowledge, will not fail to point out the best manner of discharging his duties.

# CHAPTER IX.

## The Necessity and the Manner of Explaining the Lesson.

Explaining and questioning go hand in hand, and cannot be separated in teaching Catechism, for, although they are subject to different rules, yet in practice they form but one process. I have, however, thought it most advantageous to the teacher to treat them separately, that he may better understand the laws by which he is to be guided in the use of them.

One of the most common and detrimental errors that teachers commit, is, as has been said, that of acting on the principle, that whatever is clear to their own minds must be equally clear to those of the children. They too readily forget how much was required to make them familiar with these truths, and how, notwithstanding the pains taken by parents and teachers in instructing them, their knowledge was not perfect, until, by much reading and study, they perfected it themselves. No Catechism is so simple in its language, or so exhaustive in its treatment of the subjects upon which it discourses, as not to leave much to the industry of the teacher. The literal and doctrinal meaning of words must be made intelligible to the young minds; and the

connection between the teaching contained in the day's lesson with those that precede and those that follow, must be pointed out, in order to show the unity and beauty of Catholic doctrine, and the appropriateness and expressiveness of the rites and ceremonies of the Church. I do not merely call this a laudable work—it is a *necessary* one ; and the teacher who fails to perform it, fails to discharge one of his essential duties. He is employed, not to hear the class recite a portion of the Catechism, however well they may do it : he is placed over them to see what they already know ; to show them how to apply their minds to the acquiring of additional religious knowledge ; to correct what they may have misunderstood ; but, most of all, to assist them to understand, as far as they are capable, whatever is contained in the lesson, or is necessary for a thorough acquaintance with it. In a word, he must cause their *intellects*, and not their *memories* only, to grasp and comprehend the full meaning of the lesson.

An exhaustive explanation, besides being necessary, has many advantages, and becomes its own reward, even in the present. The children that leave the school every Sunday, with as thorough a knowledge of the day's lesson as their minds are capable of grasping, will be encouraged to apply themselves with greater diligence to future lessons, from the conviction that the teacher will aid them, and that, with his assistance, they will again carry from the class-room a valuable increase of useful information. The class that learns

most thoroughly, learns most willingly; and the teacher who is at the greatest pains to explain the lesson, derives the greatest pleasure from the exercise. The moment he resolves to take as little trouble as possible with the lesson, the same moment will the children instinctively come to a like determination. The only *easy* way of teaching Catechism is that of bestowing the greatest care upon it.

The first question that presents itself, in connection with the subject of explanation, is, "What must the teacher explain?" A comprehensive answer might be given by saying that he should explain whatever the children cannot reasonably be supposed to understand without an explanation. But to go more into detail: he should first explain the *literal meaning of words*. It is the misfortune of both teacher and pupil to be obliged to use text-books that have not been sufficiently simplified in language. The compilers of our smaller Catechisms, generally, have paid but little attention to this all-important particular. The profusion with which they scatter polysyllabic and foreign words up and down the pages of their books, betrays a forgetfulness of the weakness of young minds, which is a great mistake on the part of the writers. It is humiliating to think that, out of a dozen different Catechisms, prepared for American children, scarcely one should be written in language adapted to the capacity of young minds. The preparation of a Catechism is a difficult undertaking; but the difficulty is found in simplifying the doctrine so as to

make it comprehensible, not in simplifying the language. Besides, in the compilation of the Catechisms now in use among us, little attention, it would seem, has been given to the language.

The teacher will then carefully explain, in language more simple and intelligible, *every word* that he has reason to believe the children do not understand. He will avoid the mistake made by the compiler of one of the Catechisms now in use, who, in attempting to explain what is meant by "mysteries of religion," "explains" them by calling them "revealed truths, which we do not comprehend." Here, instead of clearing up one difficulty, he creates two more in addition to it, by using the words, "revealed" and "comprehend," which stand just as much in need of explanation as the word "mystery." The teacher will meet with little trouble in finding out what is intelligible to the children, and what is obscure. Many words carry sufficient evidence on their faces, as *incarnation*, *infallibility*, etc. ; and others are readily known by the manner in which the children pronounce them. But nothing proves it more clearly than to hear the children substitute, for the given word, one of a different meaning, without at all appearing to be conscious of it. Here an explanation must be given. The teacher's knowledge of the children that compose his class, aided by his judgment and previous study of the lesson, will readily show him what has to be cleared up.

In the next place, he should explain the *doctrinal*

meaning of words and expressions. There are many words, the form or sound of which gives the child no clue to the meaning; as, *Eucharist*, *Transubstantiation*, etc. Here again we may leave the teacher to the dictates of his own judgment, telling him, at the same time, to estimate the intelligence of the children at the lowest prudent figure, and even to distrust them in much of what they seem to comprehend. It is natural for children to deceive themselves, both from an ignorance of the actual extent of their knowledge, and also from an unwillingness to appear ignorant of what they imagine the teacher thinks they should know. Let this be his rule: Explain the entire lesson with such clearness, that the children not only *may* understand it, but that they *must* understand it, and cannot remain ignorant of what it contains.

Not content with this, he should, as has been said, explain the particular *doctrine* treated of in the lesson; as, the doctrine of the creation, the fall of man, original sin, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the eternity of rewards and punishments hereafter, etc. He should especially be careful to explain whatever relates to the every-day duties of the Christian. The most important of these are: respect and obedience to parents; avoiding the occasions of sin; restraining the tongue, and the inclination to anger; daily prayer; respect for the Church and for holy things; the Mass, and the obligation of assisting devoutly at it on Sundays and holy-days; all that relates to the sacraments of Penance and

the Holy Eucharist, and, in a word, whatever he knows to bear directly on the conduct and duties of the young, in the particular circumstances in which the children of his class are placed. His duty is not merely to teach them to *know*, but also to *fulfil*, the obligations of Christian children in the present, and give promise of doing so in the future. Instructions of this kind should not, however, be given formally in so many lectures, but should be made to flow naturally out of the explanations of these subjects, when the children are engaged in studying those parts of the Catechism that treat of them.

It will now no longer appear strange to the teacher that I should have insisted so strongly upon his studying the lesson before presenting himself to the class; nor that I should have requested him to spend the entire time allotted to the recitation with it. The necessity of both will be apparent to him.

The foregoing are what may be called *necessary* matters for explanation, and cannot be neglected without a dereliction of duty. There are others not so necessary, but which are very useful, as their explanation will give the children a more intelligent view of many of the ceremonies and pious practices of the Church, and will serve, at the same time, to interest and entertain the class, when, from some reason, the teacher may have leisure at his command. He should even vary the exercises by occasionally taking a little time for such explanations. It will divert the children,

at the same time that it becomes a source of useful information. The following are a few of these subjects: *The Agnus Dei*, and why it is worn; holy-water, and its various uses; blessed candles, and why they are burned at the bedside of the dying; the sacred vestments, and the meaning of their different colors; the sacred vessels of the altar; pious pictures and statues, and the meaning of the different attitudes in which the same saint may be represented in them; Vespers, Benediction, Church music, and a number of similar things not explained in the smaller Catechism. We forget to profit by that curiosity so natural to children, which desires an explanation of every object that comes under the eye. If they cease to ask for it, it is because they have had too great a fear of the teacher; or because experience has taught them that he will not comply with their request. Yet nothing else will so much endear him to them, or enable him to arrest their flagging attention, as explanations like these. The moment they begin to look upon him as a repertory of liturgical knowledge, a sort of walking dictionary of ecclesiastical lore, if his kindness be proportionate to his learning, he is master of their hearts, and can teach them with pleasure and profit. He should inquire of the pastor what books of the library contain information on these topics. Two faults may, however, be committed in these explanations: that of indulging too frequently in them, and that of neglecting to question the children on what has been explained; for, although

it is a kind of relaxation, it must yet tend directly to the improvement of the children.

*When* should the teacher explain difficulties? In the first place, when the teacher assigns a lesson, he should require the children to hold their books open before them, and follow him while he gives such an explanation of the literal and doctrinal meaning of what it contains, as is found in the first part of the examples, placed at the end of the following chapter. He should ask such questions only as are necessary to convince him that his explanations have been understood, not that they are fully committed to memory. This explanation will familiarize the children not only with the lesson as a whole, but also with every question and answer in it, and with its connection with the lessons that precede. It will also afford such an acquaintance with it as will both encourage and assist them in studying it. They will almost know it before they begin its study at all. While hearing the recitation, he will explain all other difficulties when they arise; and will, at the end, sum up the lesson in a lecture similar to that found in the examples given at the close of the next chapter. But what is to be done, if he has not time to explain the whole lesson? This must not disturb him; let him begin on the following Sunday at the place where he concludes to-day. The children will know whatever they have gone over; and it is not to put them through the book, but to aid them in understanding it, that he has been employed. They

will learn in a satisfactory manner; what is stored away in the memory will remain there, and, if they advance but slowly, there will be no fear of having to resort to that most distasteful and discouraging of all measures, turning the class back. Besides, the time during which children usually attend Sunday-school is quite sufficient for the explanation of an ordinary small Catechism. Let the teacher's motto be: Not how much, but how well.

*How* must the teacher explain the lesson? He must, in the first place, confine his remarks strictly to the lesson, and to what rises naturally out of it, and is necessary for the proper understanding of it. Then, his explanations should be adapted to the age and capacity of the children. With the smaller ones, he should go no further than the literal meaning of the text, adding the simplest elucidation of doctrine. The circle may be extended with those a little more advanced in years, so as to embrace a somewhat deeper explanation of doctrine, and extend to matters connected with the text which require explanation, in order that it may be properly understood. With the senior classes, still greater depth and latitude are permitted. But in no case should the explanation extend to what is not at all connected with the lesson. Nothing should be treated of that he has reason to believe is already known to the children; and, if there be a doubt in his mind, let him ask a few questions and learn the extent of their knowledge. In treating of the sixth and ninth Command-

ments, and kindred matters, his explanations should be very brief, and his words carefully selected, and in putting questions still greater caution must be used. Any imprudence on his part might teach the children sins of which they are happily ignorant, or might excite a curiosity that might prove a fatal temptation for months to come. Let him bear in mind that if, in general, it is better to be silent than to speak imprudently, it becomes here a sacred duty. Ignorance is preferable to a knowledge of sin.

In addition to the advice already given, the teacher should be guided by the following admonition of the Abbé Dubois: "Be as clear as possible in your explanations, and *never pass over a single word of the Catechism without endeavoring to make it perfectly understood.* Forget, if you can, that you yourself know the things to be explained, and look for their meaning with your children, as if you were yourself ignorant of them. Ask yourself often, as you read the clearest parts of the Catechism, whether a limited intelligence might not still find something obscure or ambiguous. If you do not attend to this, while you think you are instructing, you will not instruct at all; at least, your teaching will be defective and incomplete. Catechists are greatly mistaken in thinking the children must understand, because they understand themselves. Assure yourself, by the best means in your power, that your explanations are thoroughly caught by *all* your children, and do not pass to other points, unless you are quite sure that

there is no obscurity left in their minds, on any of the points just explained. In order to ascertain that it is so, do not content yourself with questioning those who are well instructed; but address yourself rather to those whose intelligence is but little developed. Vary the language in which you clothe your questions; the sense will be the same, but, the words being different, you will see if the sense is thoroughly understood."*

Another precaution is necessary in explaining: that of not giving the children a false conscience, by making them imagine that to be a venial sin which is really mortal, or that mortal which is only venial. The latter is the more common phase of this error; and what makes it the more dangerous is, that it is more apt to be committed by teachers of tender, than by those of moderate, piety. In their zeal to portray the horror of sin before the children in as glowing terms as possible, they are apt to exaggerate the *species* of the particular sin under discussion, rather than to insist on the fact that every sin, whether mortal or venial, from the simple fact that it is a *sin* at all, is the greatest outrage that man could offer to God, and merits a punishment, in some sort infinite. Let him lay before the children the words of St. Liguori, who says: "A venial sin is a greater evil than all the other evils that can happen to creatures. A lie, a venial curse, is a greater evil than if all men, all the saints, and all the angels, were to be

* "Zeal in the Work of the Ministry," pp. 500, 501.

sent to hell." * A moment's reflection will convince the teacher that a false conscience in the children must be productive of the most lamentable consequences. Through forgetfulness, surprise, or the mischief of a companion, they may be guilty of imperfections and semi-deliberate venial sins by the dozen; and what must the consequence be, if all, or even some of these, are regarded as mortal? The children will be unhappy, scrupulous, discouraged, and in danger even of making sacrilegious communions, from the impossibility of avoiding these faults entirely between the time of confession and that of communion. Yet this false conscience is not uncommon, and I have found children who thought it a mortal sin to whisper in school; and they inferred it from the erroneous manner in which their obligations in this particular had been explained to them. Teachers must use great care, and never pronounce a sin to be mortal, unless they know without doubt that it is such. It is no trifle to say that a certain act is enough to condemn the soul to eternal fire; and the greatest theologians of the Church have weighed their words with the greatest care when treating of such matters.

I cannot, however, take leave of this subject, without again pausing to insist on the absolute necessity of explaining the Catechism. It cannot be said to be taught at all, unless a thorough explanation is given of

* "Treatise on the Commandments and Sacraments" (Introduction).

the text. If volumes by the dozen have been written on dogmatic and moral theology,—and the Catechism is the abridgment of both united,—how is it possible that a little book, of perhaps one hundred pages, should, without note or explanation, afford children an adequate idea of their multifarious religious and moral duties? And it is almost equally impossible that, without explanation, illustration or anecdote, even this little should be understood or indelibly fixed upon the memory. Professors of history tell us that the best manner of impressing its facts on the memory is to study to cluster a number of anecdotes around each person or place treated of in the text. And we all know from our experience, however limited, that what is called the association of ideas is often sufficient to set the mind thinking, and recall many scraps of knowledge almost forgotten. The picture of a friend, for example, is shown us, and immediately the memory recalls a thousand incidents regarding him; and we begin to speak of him. So it is with the Catechism properly explained, and judiciously interlarded with illustration and anecdote. Every question and answer will recall what the teacher said; and the anecdote, with which he illustrated the text, will show also the manner in which,—unconsciously to the children at the time,—he prepared the way for a wholesome instruction. Let me, then, beg of teachers, not to grow weary of explaining, but to heap it up; and provided it serve to elucidate the text, and questions are asked upon it, you can never

have too much, or fatigue the children. Any one can ask the questions in the book, and hear the children recite the answers; the children could learn them if they would, without a teacher at all; but it is only the good teacher that can and will explain the Catechism as it should be explained. For examples on explanation the reader is referred to the end of the next chapter.

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# CHAPTER X.

## The Art of Questioning.

We now approach the most important subject that could engage our attention in a work of this kind. It is the means not only of testing knowledge, but also of increasing it, making it assume a more definite form, and impressing it more indelibly on the mind. Lord Bacon says, "A wise question is the half of knowledge;" and the universal application of it to every species of education is a convincing proof of its utility and importance. It is the first means to which a child resorts, and, to his latest day, he will never relinquish the use of it. A writer on this subject remarks: "Whoever has listened with close attention to the conversation of children cannot fail to have noticed how largely it is composed of questions. On every subject, from the simplest to the most abstruse, their inquiries come thick and fast, tasking the knowledge, patience, and ingenuity of the wisest and clearest heads to give correct and satisfactory answers. It is, doubtless, owing to this characteristic that, during the early years of life, improvement is so much more rapid than at any subsequent period. The child is strongly actuated by a desire to know, and has, as yet, no dread

of exposing his ignorance. Moreover, he has an unbounded trust in what is told him, and therefore takes the most simple and direct method of satisfying his mental cravings."

But, without insisting further on a point that must be self-evident to every observant mind, I shall proceed to the art of questioning. The true scope of the questioning power is to awaken curiosity, or a desire to learn; to arouse the memory, or the recollection of what is already known; or to point out something unknown, that may be inferred from what is known.

Questions may be divided into those of *examination*, which are such as the teacher puts with a view of ascertaining what the children already know, and what direction his further instruction must take to be useful. Questions of *explanation*, asking the meaning of words, or drawing the children's attention more particularly to something which the Catechism does not fully explain. Many questions of this kind can be put to advantage when treating of the sufferings and death of Christ, the administration and reception of the sacraments, and, in general, whatever has many ceremonies or circumstances connected with it. Questions of *instruction*, or such as are calculated to rouse in the children the spirit of inquiry, by setting the mind to thinking. These are very important, but they require skill on the part of the teacher, who would use them to great advantage. The child can frequently be led, by means of these, to detect an error in a previous answer.

Without stopping to explain, the teacher can give the children a more thorough knowledge of the lesson, and fix it more indelibly on their memory, by drawing their attention to the different parts of the answer, as it is given in the Catechism. Take, as an example, the answer to the question :

"How does the bishop administer Confirmation?"

"The bishop stretches his hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, with His sevenfold gifts, and anoints the forehead of each one with holy chrism, in the form of a cross."

Now a child may answer this from memory, and yet not advert to what it really contains. Let the teacher draw his attention more closely to the different ceremonies by asking :

"What does the bishop first do?"

"*Stretches out his hands.*"

"Where?"

"*Over those who are to be confirmed.*"

"What further?"

"*He prays.*"

"For what?"

"*That they may receive the Holy Ghost,*" etc.

In this manner, every particular is engraven upon the memory, by being separated from the context. It is all the better to have the children answer in their own words, rather than in those of the book ; and, when it can be done with propriety, it is advisable to have them

show the manner in which the different ceremonies are performed. These questions need not and should not be confined to the answers found in the book, but should be extended to whatever explanation is given on the lesson. The essence of teaching consists in engraving *particulars* on the memory. There is no general knowledge without it, as there can be no house without the crude material from which to construct it. We shall presently see what pains the teacher should be at, to train the children in the dissecting of answers, and the asking of questions concerning them. Questions of *recapitulation*, or review, which are put by the teacher either at the opening of class, to discover how much of the lesson of the previous Sunday has been retained in the memory ; or near the close of the recitation, to learn what impressions his teaching has made on the minds of the children. They are also used at an examination of any other kind.

Finally, there are *elliptical* questions, of which I have already spoken.

Besides a knowledge of the different kinds of questions, and the circumstances in which they may be employed to advantage, there are certain rules that must be observed, if the teacher would be successful in the use of them.

The first rule is, that no useless or irrelevant questions should be asked. The principal classes of these are: questions that do not bear upon the lesson, and those that relate to matters with which the children are known

to be already familiar. Questions, that are evidently beyond the ability of the children, are equally out of place. Never ask a question, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, with a direct view of puzzling the children. Never laugh at an answer, or make light of it, or show disappointment on hearing it, nor permit others to do so, no matter how ludicrous or wide of the mark it may be. On the contrary, it should be the aim of the teacher to encourage the children to speak out freely. In this, he has their natural timidity to contend against. But if he be the first to make light of their efforts, he may in a moment seal the lips of the class for weeks, and prevent another attempt at impromptu answer. With a little dexterity, he can correct faulty answers, without even commenting upon them, or seeming to have noticed the effects they contain. This being a delicate matter, and one upon which a great deal depends, should, for those reasons, engage his closest attention. For the greater encouragement of the class, his manner, the expression of his countenance, and especially that of his eyes, should be such as to manifest a lively sympathy, and inspire confidence.

In the next place, his questions should be properly framed. The better to show what is meant by this, I shall select a few examples from some of the Catechisms in use, in which, unfortunately, it is easy to find but too many. Every question should contain one leading idea, and no more, to be embodied in the answer. The child will meet with difficulty enough in framing the

answer, without requiring him to group different leading ideas together at the same time. Opposed to this, are *double questions ;* as :

"To *whom* and *when* did Christ give the power of remitting sin ?"

"On *what day* and after *what manner* did the Holy Ghost descend upon the apostles ?" etc.

*Ambiguous questions ;* as :

"What should parents do to perform their duties ?" etc.

When a question is put, it should be framed in such a manner that children cannot help seeing immediately what answer is required of them. The younger children should be trained to embody the question in the answer ; and questions should be so framed as to admit of it. This is a natural process for an uneducated mind. How faulty are the following and similar questions for beginners :

"What is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity ?"

"The Blessed Trinity is the mystery of three persons in one God."

"Is it a great sin to receive a sacrament unworthily ?"

"To receive a sacrament unworthily is," etc.

Such inversions as these are calculated to puzzle any child beginning the study of Catechism. Questions should not be put that can be answered by "Yes" or "No," unless it be very rarely, to encourage an unusually dull or timid child.

To continue in the words of F. Potter : "The

teacher should encourage the children to devote the full powers of their minds to the solving of the questions which he proposes to them. To this end, he may assume the air of a man who seeks to be instructed. He will take care not to ask of them anything which is above their capacity or information. He will prudently insinuate the answer to them, and put them on the way of giving it with correctness. Simple as all this may seem, it will be found of great practical utility; since, if we inspire the children with this lively interest in the work, and persuade them, through little successes of this kind, that they are capable of answering the questions which the catechist proposes to them, they will quickly begin to apply themselves to reflect, and to exercise their reasoning powers and their judgment upon the solution of these difficulties; whilst, on the other hand, if the questions put to them be above their capacity or attainments, they will presently become disgusted with the whole affair, and give themselves up to levity and distraction.

"It is of great importance to see that the children fully comprehend each question which is proposed to them, and that it makes its due impression upon them. This will be easily judged from their whole deportment, and more especially from their countenances. If we find that they have not comprehended what we said to them, it is necessary to repeat it in other and more simple terms.

"We ought to adapt our explanations and inter-

rogations to the capacity neither of the most intelligent nor of the most obtuse, but to that middle class which will always be in the majority." *

No rules can be given to direct the teacher when and upon what to ask questions; these he must learn from his knowledge of the ability of the children, from the nature of the lesson, and from the particular circumstances of the class at the time. All that can be said is, to ask questions plentifully on the lesson, on the explanations given, on all that relates to the every-day duties of the children, and, in a word, on whatever will admit of useful questions. If they are properly framed, and judiciously put, he can hardly sin by excess.

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*Examples on Explaining and Questioning.*

The following passage has been selected on account of the number and variety of topics it contains, and the circumstances connected with them. The explanation is adapted to a class of beginners, because it is more difficult to explain a lesson for them than it is for such as are further advanced:

ON OUR FIRST PARENTS, ETC.

*Q.* How came we to be in the *power of the devil?*

*A.* By the disobedience of our first parents, in eating the *forbidden fruit.* (Gen. ii and iii.)

* "The Pastor and his People," pp. 225, 226.

*Q.* Who were our first parents?

*A.* Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.

*Q.* Why did God command our first parents not to eat the forbidden fruit?

*A. To make them sensible of his dominion over them, and of their dependence on him, and to try their obedience.*

*Q.* Who *tempted* our first parents to eat the forbidden fruit?

*A.* The devil, *envying their happy state.* (Gen. iii.)

*Q.* Whom do you mean by the devil?

*A.* One of the *rebellious* or *fallen angels*, whom God cast out of heaven.

*Q.* What do you mean by angels?

*A. Pure spirits*, that is, *without a body*, *created to adore* and *enjoy* God in heaven.

*Q.* Were the angels created for *any other purpose?*

*A.* Yes; *to assist* before the *throne* of God, and to *minister unto Him;* and they have been often sent as *messengers* from God to man; and are also *appointed* our *guardians.* (Apoc. vii, 9; Heb, i, 7; Matt. iv, 6; xviii, 10.)

*Q.* Why were any angels cast out of heaven?

*A.* Because *through pride* they *rebelled against God.* (Isa. xiv.)

*Q.* Did God punish in any other way the angels who rebelled?

*A.* Yes; he *condemned* them to *hell*, a place of *eternal torments.*

*Q.* Why did God make hell?

*A.* To punish the devils or bad angels.

*Q.* Are any others condemned to hell beside the devils or bad angels?

*A.* Yes; all who die *enemies to God;* that is, all who die in the *state of mortal sin.*

*Q.* Can any one come out of hell?

*A.* No; out of hell there is no *redemption.*

*Q.* How did God *reward* the angels who *remained faithful?*

*A.* He *confirmed them forever in glory.**

When the teacher assigns the lesson, and before it is studied, he should explain the difficult words and phrases in each answer, as they occur, which, in the above passage, are printed in Italics, thus: *Fruit* means anything that grows on trees, and can be eaten, as apples, peaches, pears, etc.; *forbidden fruit* means the fruit of a tree which God told Adam and Eve they should not eat. I shall tell you all about it in a minute. *To make them sensible of His dominion over them* means to make them know that God was their Master, and that they must do whatever He commanded them to do; *their dependence on Him* means, that they could do nothing unless He helped them, and that all they had, and all they should ever get, must come from Him; *to try their obedience* is to see if they would obey Him or not; *who tempted our first parents* means, who tried to make them commit a sin, by eating the fruit which God told them not to eat, etc.

*"Butler's Catechism," Lesson v.

There are a few abstract terms, such as *spirit, soul,* etc., which the teacher will not be able to make the smaller children comprehend. The most that he can hope for is, to teach them that there are certain beings which exist, but cannot be seen. In doing so, he will be forced to use comparisons which are not strictly correct, but which will still be sufficient for his purpose. Thus he can say :

You cannot see an angel, but still there are angels. There are many things that you are not able to see. If you look at the trees, you will sometimes see their tops moving backward and forward. If any one should ask you what makes them move, you would say : "It is the wind ; still you cannot see the wind." In the morning you hear the school-bell ring, but you do not see the sound coming from the bell to you. So it is with the angels : they can come from heaven to us, and be close to us, and we cannot see them. Or sometimes you have a pain in your head, but you cannot see the pain, and it does not make your head look larger or smaller. So it is with your soul. You have one, but you are not able to see it ; and it does not make any difference in your size.

The teacher, after having given such examples as are absolutely necessary, to afford the children some idea of the existence of invisible creatures, may supply deficiencies by saying : When you are older, you will learn more of these things. He cannot make them understand how a spirit is capable of thought or action.

When he is hearing the recitation, he should ask such questions as the following, on the previous explanation :—

What do you mean by *fruit*? What is the *forbidden* fruit? What does the Catechism mean when it says, *To make them sensible of his dominion over them*?

If the children have forgotten the explanation, he should repeat it, and then the question.

When he has gone over the lesson in this manner,—or less simply if the class is further advanced,—he proceeds to sum up the whole in a kind of lecture. This will be longer or shorter, in proportion to the number and importance of the doctrines, ceremonies, and circumstances, that come up for treatment. It will frequently happen, as in the present instance, that the Catechism does not follow the natural order of events. But the teacher must, of course, do so, and put his explanation in some such form as this :—

At first, there was nothing but God. Then He made heaven and the angels. (Here he should refer to the explanation of heaven, already given the children, and ask a question, to see whether they have remembered it or not.) The angels praised God all the time, because they saw He was so good; and they did whatever else He commanded them. They were very happy. But after a while one of the greatest and most beautiful of them, who was called Lucifer, got a thought of pride into his mind, and wanted to be like God. He told this to some of the other angels, and

asked them to help him to fight against God. But God put all these out of heaven, and never let them come in again. These are what the Catechism calls *rebellious*, or *fallen, angels*. After they were put out of heaven, they were called *devils*, or bad angels. But God would punish them still more. He made hell, which is a very large, hot fire, and He put them into it. This shows how bad a sin pride is. (Here let the teacher pause, and ask such questions as are given at the end of the explanation.)

Long after God had made the angels and heaven, He made the world, and all that we see in it, and the sun, and moon, and stars, and everything. The last of all the things He made was Adam and Eve. These two were the first father and mother of all the people in the whole world. He then put them into a large, beautiful garden which He had made, and which was full of all kinds of trees and flowers, and birds and animals. It was a very pretty place, and was called the Garden of Paradise, or the Garden of Eden. He told them to take care of it; and He said they might eat of the fruit of all the trees but the one which was in the middle of the garden. The fruit of that tree was called the forbidden fruit, because God told them not to eat any of it, for, if they did, they should die. The birds and animals were all tame, and would play around our first parents without being afraid, and without trying to hurt them. God would come sometimes, too, and talk to them. We do not know what shape He took,

or how He appeared, but He came some way. (Pause again and question.)

At last Eve was walking through the garden by herself one day, and she came near the tree of the forbidden fruit. The devil saw her coming, and made himself like a big serpent or snake, and crawled up into the tree, to wait for her. She soon came up to the tree, and looked at it. She was not afraid of the serpent, for she did not know it was the bad angel. While she was looking at the apples on the tree, the serpent asked her why she and Adam did not eat some of them. It was strange to hear a serpent speak, but she did not stop to think of that. She only said that God did not allow them to eat any of these apples, because, if they did, they should die. Then the serpent talked to her for a while, and told her that the reason God did not allow her and Adam to eat of them was, because He was afraid they should be gods, too, if they did. He told her there was no danger of her dying, and he said a great many other things that were not true. Eve looked at the apples all the time, and she thought they were the prettiest in the whole garden. She wondered why God let her and Adam eat of all the other fruit, but would not let them eat any of these apples. She wanted very much to taste them, because, when they were so pretty, she thought they must be good, too. At last the serpent gave her one, and she ate it. She knew it was wrong, but still she did it. Then she took one to Adam. He won-

dered at her for doing a thing that was so wrong; but after she had talked a while to him, he took the apple she had, and ate it. This is what the Catechism calls "the disobedience of our first parents, in eating the forbidden fruit." (Pause and question.) After this was done, Adam and Eve felt that they had committed a sin in disobeying God, and they tried to hide themselves in the bushes, because they were afraid to meet Him. The thoughts that came into their minds, before they had eaten the forbidden fruit, show us that, when we go to do wrong, there is something in us which makes us feel that it is wrong, and that we should not do it. That is called our conscience. If we listen to it, and obey it, we shall never commit a sin. And when we think anything is wrong, we must not stop to look at it, or to think about it, as Eve did, when she looked at the apples. If we do, God will not help us, and we shall be sure to commit a sin, just as Eve did. The disobedience of our first parents shows us, too, that no one can be happy when he has committed a sin. It makes us uneasy and afraid. (Pause and question.)

Soon after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, God came into the garden and called them. When they had come up to Him, He asked them what they had done, and why they had tried to hide themselves. He knew it, but He wanted them to confess it. Then Adam threw the blame on Eve, and said it was all her fault. When God asked her why she had

disobeyed Him, she said it was the serpent that had given her the apple and told her to eat it. She did not seem to think how badly she had acted in obeying the devil rather than God. But that is what every one does when he commits a sin. You do what the bad angel tells you, instead of doing what God tells you. This is what makes a sin be so bad, and this is what makes it displease God. After God had spoken to Eve, He called the serpent, and cursed it. He did not curse Adam and Eve, but He cursed the earth, and He told them that they should have to work hard all their lives, and to suffer a great deal, and should then die. But He promised that our Saviour should be born; and He said that seeing that the bad angel had made Eve, who was the mother of all people, commit a sin, there would be another woman born some day who would hurt the serpent more than he had hurt our first parents. God did not tell Adam and Eve who this woman would be; but we all know that it is the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is our dear, good mother. But I'll tell you about her some other time. God then put Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Paradise, and never let them come into it again. If our first parents had not been disobedient, we should not have to suffer or die. But now we have part of their punishment. You see, then, that all the evil in the world comes from sin. But we shall see more about this in the next lesson. (Pause and question.)

In asking questions, the teacher will follow the ex-

planation from the beginning, taking up such points as he feels should be impressed upon the memory of the children ; thus :—

What was the first thing that God made? What was the next? What did the angels do? What do you mean when you say, The angels *adored* God? Why did they adore Him? What thought came into the mind of one of the angels? What was his name? What did he do? Did any of the other angels help him? How did God punish them? What do we call these angels now? How did God make the world? What did He make last? Where did He put Adam and Eve? Tell me what kind of a place the Garden of Paradise was. What were in it? etc.

Not content with questioning the children in this manner on the lesson, the teacher should train them to sum it up, by asking questions of greater scope, thus :—

Now, tell me all you can about the creation of the angels. Now, tell all you know about the creation of the world. Who can tell me most about the Garden of Paradise? Which of you knows most about Adam and Eve, and what happened to them?

Then he will ask the children to sum up the entire lesson in a short narrative of their own, in answer to such a question as this :—

Now, tell me all that is in to-day's lesson?

# CHAPTER XI.

## The Manner of Conducting the Recitation.

### § 1. THE CATECHISM CLASS.

This and the following chapter will tend still more to illustrate the practical part of the art of questioning, and form a sequel to the present.

Having given so much preliminary instruction on the qualifications, duties, etc., of the good teacher, we come now to contemplate him face to face with his class. He has now to test his ability as a teacher, and put into practice the knowledge he has acquired. Speaking of the recitation, Mr. Wickersham says (and his remarks are even more applicable to teachers of Christian Doctrine than to teachers of the profane sciences): "The recitation is the most delicate part of the school-machinery. All else is but a preparation for it. A failure here is a failure everywhere. The gift of governing well is an enviable one, but good order in a school is an end secondary to that of securing good recitations. No teacher can make good scholars who does not manage the recitation skilfully. It is in this he will need his greatest tact, for he has much to lose, or much to gain. If he fail, he will have taught his pupils to hate school and study, will have

paralyzed their efforts to learn, and will have created habits that must continue to cripple their energies through life. If he succeed, he will have the proud satisfaction of seeing the budding faculties of the human soul bloom under the culture of his hands; and happy hearts, made wiser and better, will thank him for his kindness and care." *

The teacher who would conduct a recitation successfully, must have a well-defined idea of the ends of recitation. The following are the principal: 1, to note the progress made by the children since the last recitation; 2, to afford an opportunity for correcting erroneous views, and for explaining difficulties; and, 3, to deduce wholesome lessons for the regulation of the children's conduct, and thus advance them one step farther, both in mind and heart, on the path of an exemplary Christian life. With these ideas deeply impressed upon his mind, and with a firm resolution of reducing them to practice, as far as it is in his power, the teacher appears in presence of the class; or, rather, he enters the room a few minutes before the time for the recitation to begin, and awaits the arrival of the children, that he may address a kindly word to each, as he enters and takes his place. "Many a teacher puts a barrier between himself and the warm-hearted, wide-awake boys of his class, by taking his place in the Sunday-school without seeming to recognize the presence of those already there, or to observe those coming in afterward, until he has to

* "School Economy," pp. 175, 176.

speak to them in the opening of the lesson. And many a teacher gets a fresh hold on the restless, trifling scholars, and prepares them for an interest in the lesson he teaches, by the sunny look and loving word through which he shows sympathy to each scholar, on his first meeting him for that day. A teacher must show his love for those whom he would instruct to love God."* Children like to be noticed by the teacher, and the one that is overlooked at such a time is apt to feel it more keenly than the teacher imagines. The children of the poor, as well as those of the rich, and perhaps even more than they, are possessed of exquisite sensibilities; and the parents are frequently more sensitive than the children. For this reason the teacher should be most careful to notice these children, and speak kindly to them. It is an act amounting to a charity, and is, besides its merit, very necessary; for the parents of the poor feel it a humiliation to permit their children to appear ill-clad in presence of the rich, — a humiliation to which only a grave sense of duty could make them at all submit. The conduct of the teacher should be such as to impress the children with the thought that he recognizes no real worth or merit in dress.

While deeply impressed with the sacred character of the work upon which he is engaged, the teacher should be free from affected piety, and should be perfectly natural in his manner and in tone of voice.

A few questions may be asked, in a familiar way,

* "Sunday School Paper."

about the subject of the lesson, and its connection with that of last Sunday; and, the way being thus paved, a brief review of the last lesson may be made with profit. The children should be accustomed to this; it will go far in teaching them to grasp the subject of the lesson, and fix it on their memory. Care, however, should be taken not to ask too difficult a question in the beginning; for, if the children are silenced at the first question, they are apt to lose courage, and not venture upon another attempt. Besides, it will be observed that, if the child to whom the question is first addressed fails to answer it, some of the others will immediately conclude that it is difficult, and will not have the courage to attempt an answer. They should be led on by a gradual ascent from that which is less to that which is more difficult; their courage will increase with their little successes.

In questioning the children on the lesson, the common error of commencing at the head of the class and the beginning of the lesson, and asking each one in his turn, should be studiously avoided. The indolent will lose no time in taking advantage of the teacher's manner, and, while studying that question only which will fall to themselves, will be at little or no pains to study the rest of the lesson. The best manner of putting a question is for the teacher to ask it before naming the child who is expected to answer, and then to point out the one who is required to speak. In this manner he will secure the attention of all, and set the mind of each to work

at the same time, besides securing the previous study of the entire lesson by the whole class. If a child is inattentive, the teacher should require him to answer: it will cure him of his fault. If a child is precocious, and given to a pert and over-confident manner of answering, put the more difficult questions to him. But, if he is unable to answer, do not manifest satisfaction, much less express it, but leave the humiliation silently to bear its fruit. Resort should not, however, be had to this with the child that answers readily, but without pertness of manner. Apart from this, the teacher should never directly attempt to puzzle a child; it may do harm, it can do no good. Children not gifted with ordinary talent, or those who are excessively timid, should be encouraged, and more especially if the teacher has reason to believe they are earnestly endeavoring to learn. Questions easily answered should be put to them, to inspire them with confidence. A large number of the obtuse, and even of the indolent, remain so from an excessive diffidence in themselves; and while punishment might serve only to confirm them in this unfortunate disposition, prudent encouragement will afford an effectual remedy, if one exists. But children so encouraged should not be permitted to see that a favor is shown them; for then, so far from inspiring them with confidence, it would produce the opposite effect. When they answer correctly, a moderate praise should be bestowed upon their success.

If a child is considerably larger than his classmates,

the teacher should encourage him, for the very fact of being among them is a trying humiliation. Still greater attention should be paid to his instruction, if he has not yet made his first communion; and if he cannot be taught the letter of the Catechism,—for many such children do not read at all, or, at best, but indifferently,—he should be taught, as briefly as possible, the doctrines and practices necessary for the proper reception of this holy sacrament. His instruction should be hastened, as he may not be long in the school. The teacher should never manifest signs of impatience or disgust at the little progress made by certain members of the class, and must never appear to be at his wit's end to know what he should do with them. He must ever be master of the situation. He will carefully avoid another common but pernicious fault of many parents and teachers: that of instituting comparisons between members of the class, particularly by showing how a smaller child is able to answer readily what puzzles a larger one. Emulation is necessary; but this is not. As a general rule, it will either discourage the larger one, and perhaps make him cease to attend school altogether, or it will make him stubborn and indifferent, while it will render the smaller one haughty and vain, and distasteful to the rest of the class. Nor should he call the stupid child by opprobrious names, as dunce, blockhead, etc., even when his tardy progress is evidently his own fault. It must not be forgotten that the parents are frequently more to be blamed than the

children ; and, while the teacher is not permitted to animadvert on the conduct of the parents in the childrens' presence, he should not, on the other hand, visit the faults of the former upon those who are in a measure innocent.

But one of his greatest difficulties will be to avoid favoritism. When he sees a member of the class studious, and intent upon advancing, it is impossible not to regard him with a more favorable eye than he does the less studious, and difficult not to manifest it in his manner. But, whatever be his feelings, he should sedulously prevent them from shaping his conduct. Children are remarkably quick in discovering any show of partiality ; and the feelings of jealousy with which the success of the diligent and talented child is naturally calculated to inspire them, will impart additional keenness to their perception, and make them notice the remotest approach to favoritism. Nothing could be more fatal to the harmony that should exist in the class. It is a poison which it is extremely difficult to counteract, and hence the only safety for the teacher is found in avoiding the least semblance of it. The better to do so, he should not accept a present from any of the children. It fosters a bad spirit among them ; and if it is a bouquet, it may sometimes come at the expense of a neighbor's flower-garden. Lady teachers are more commonly the recipients of little presents from the children than gentlemen are, and are also more apt to be partial. But what is an expression of good-will on

the part of the child is generally injurious to the best interests of the child, the teacher, and the class. Teachers must bear with me for going thus into particulars. If they study these observations closely, they will find them to contain much more than appears on the surface. Trifles make perfection; but perfection is no trifle.

But the teacher will soon discover that he has a great variety of talent, and perhaps as great a variety of good-will among the members of his class; for, while some advance without effort, and others are studious, yet advance but moderately, some will be found to attend with great irregularity, and others to be given up to idleness. How is he to harmonize these discordant elements? Let him, in the first place, maintain his composure, and avoid any signs of perplexity and annoyance. A mischievous child finds a pleasure sometimes in seeing the teacher in trouble. In the next place, he should follow out carefully the instructions on interesting the class, in the recitation, by interesting himself in explaining the lesson. The interest which the children take in the recitation will be the measure of their efforts, of their good behavior, and of their advancement. *The whole class must be kept usefully engaged during the entire recitation.* Explanations and remarks should seldom be addressed to one child only, although they may be more applicable to one than to another. Give the children a comfortable position, and do not suppress every sign of merriment. A smile or moderate laugh, if it be not at the expense

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of something holy, the teacher, or a classmate, will inspire new life. The teacher should have a regard for their comfort and happiness, as well as for their advancement, and should not fear to manifest it. These remarks, in connection with what has been said in other chapters of this work, will not fail to insure a successful and pleasing recitation.

# CHAPTER XII.

## The Manner of Conducting the Recitation. (Continued.)

### THE PRAYER-CLASS.

Before entering upon this part of our subject, I would recommend the teacher of such children as have been promoted from the prayer to the Catechism-class, to require them to repeat, from time to time, the prayers which they are accustomed to recite most frequently. Experience teaches that children, if left to themselves, as parents too frequently leave them, are apt soon to forget part of their prayers, or to change some of the words in them. The teacher should insist on this, even in the case of children who have already made their first communion, but at such intervals only as his prudence may deem expedient or necessary. It is not uncommon for confessors to find penitents, of almost adult age, who are unable to recite the *Confiteor* and the *Act of Contrition*. Care should be taken to have the children know these perfectly, as well as the *Lord's Prayer*, *Hail Mary*, *Creed*, *Acts of Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*, with the *Prayer to the Holy Guardian Angel*, and the *Memorare*. The children should also be taught the nature of the daily examination of conscience, and the manner of making it.

From the beginning, they should be taught what it is to pray; to whom their prayers are addressed; why they are obliged to pray; and such simple lessons regarding this holy exercise as will supply them with proper motives for performing it in a manner pleasing to God, and profitable to themselves. They should be taught to love it, and to look upon it as the most necessary act in the daily life of the Christian. The more successfully to accomplish this, the teacher will, after having taught them to pray night and morning, inquire whether they have done so or not. Forgetfulness should not, however, be censured too severely. Children have not that tenacity of memory peculiar to older people, and may not have parents to remind them of their duty, and to see that it is duly performed. Besides, if he is too severe, he may induce some of the children to tell a lie, to avoid a scolding. By a gentle manner, a little address and perseverance, he will in the end bring them to the holy exercise of daily prayer. But let his whole mind be bent upon it; for daily prayer is the armor against daily temptations, and the key to the treasury of God's graces. He should also be careful to have the children learn the precise *Acts*, etc., which they will afterward meet with in the Catechism; for these prayers are differently worded in different books, and although all readings have the same meaning, yet they will perplex the children.

He will find it advantageous to adopt the following plan, which is given by the celebrated Father Furniss,

and which applies not only to those who are learning their prayers, but to those also, in the junior Catechism-classes, who cannot read: "The answers the children have to learn," says this author, "will be of three kinds: either the answer will be very short, and can be learned all at once, or it will be longer, and then it must be divided; or it may be a very long answer. We take each of these three separately. 1. A short answer that can be learnt all at once: 'How many Gods are there?' A. 'There is but one God.' First, the teacher, having put the question, does not let the children answer *immediately;* because they are supposed not to know the answer, for many of them learn it only in the school. But the teacher, having put the question, *gives also the answer* (it would be very well to give it two or three times), and then, and not till then, the children repeat the answer. Secondly, the children repeat the answer several times over after the teacher, till they know it. During these continued repetitions of the answer by the children, it is well for the teacher to silence the children several times, and say both the question and the answer by himself. 2. When the answer is too long to be learnt all at once: for example, if it contains about two lines, as: 'What is commanded by the Fourth Commandment?' A. 'By the Fourth Commandment we are commanded | to love, honor and obey our parents | in all that is not sin.' The answer here is divided into three parts. Each part, in succession, is repeated several times over by itself, as the answer

above. . . . When each part is thus learnt successively, then the teacher repeats the question, and then the *whole* answer, and the children repeat the *whole* answer several times after him. 3. A very long answer: as, 'Hail Mary, full of grace, | the Lord is with thee, || blessed art thou amongst women, | and blessed is the fruit | of thy womb, Jesus. || Holy Mary, Mother of God, | pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.'||

"The above answer is divided into three general divisions by double strokes, and each general division sub-divided by one stroke. In the first general division the sub-divisions are repeated several times over, and then altogether. In like manner, the second general division, and then the third. After this, the whole answer is repeated several times over without interruption. . . .

"Each division is learned well, before going to the next. . . .

"*Observations.*—1. The principle suggested is merely that of repeating a few words of the answer several times over in succession, and then repeating the whole answer together. 2. It will require some skill in the teacher to divide. He should read the lesson over beforehand, to see what would be the proper divisions" [and should mark them with a pencil, in the book he uses]. "3. Generally, the answers should be divided as much as possible with reference to the sense. 4. Answers in which there are long

words will require more divisions." * The teacher should stop frequently, and question the individual members, till he finds that *all* know the answer, before passing on. These details, every one of which is necessary, have been quoted at length, to afford teachers an exact idea of what they should do; for it is in detail that most errors are committed.

Teachers of the Prayer-class should be careful to recite the prayers, and especially the sacred names, with becoming reverence. How sad it is, if not scandalous, to hear teachers recite prayers in a tone that sounds more like upbraiding than supplicating heaven, and repeating the holiest names with an indifference that savors more of the street rabble than of the sanctuary! The children cannot, with such an example, but think lightly of those names at the sound of which the seraphim adore, and the demons tremble. Such a teacher would be actually, by his tone and manner, preparing the children to come the more readily to swearing and blaspheming. This is a terrible reflection, yet its truth cannot be called in question. The sacred names, pronounced in a becoming manner by the teacher, will so impress the children with an idea of the reverence due to them, as to make the little ones actually dread to use them lightly. Looking back over my own life, I find that, even at six years of age. I had such a dread of the profane use of the holy name of God, that nothing could have induced me to pronounce it incon-

* "How to Teach Catechism," pp. 9–11.

siderately, much less with positive irreverence. And although I afterward labored daily for years among those who profaned it, so indelibly were the first impressions made upon my mind by the teaching and example of pious parents, that, during that time, I never so much as once used it thoughtlessly, much less blasphemously. Let this instance of the force of early impressions, taken from the life of one with whom I should be best acquainted, be a lesson to teachers upon the importance of a reverent manner. Every motion of the teacher is scrutinized by the children, and the smaller they are, the more closely will they watch him; for, not having as yet learned to depend upon themselves, they feel the necessity of being guided by the example of others. Instructing children of this class is a duty far more sacred than that of instructing larger ones; for the latter can judge for themselves to a certain extent, and have, besides, other sources of information; but the little ones are wholly at the mercy of the teacher. His words and example, if they love him as they should, are laws for them, from which they acknowledge no appeal.

The teacher should give short, clear and simple explanations of the prayers learned by the children, that should involve some of the elementary truths of religion,—questioning, of course, on what he explains. In these explanations, his principal care should be to inspire the children with a high idea of the goodness and mercy of God, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the

saints and angels. This will enkindle sentiments of reciprocal love in their young hearts, for children readily and *necessarily* love one who is known to be worthy of love. The omniscience of God, by which He sees all their thoughts and actions, should also be deeply impressed upon their minds, as well as the remembrance of the continual presence of their guardian angel; for these will be an admirable safeguard against secret sins. He should frequently return to this, trying, if possible, to make the children, however small, learn to feel at all times that they are not alone, but have the loving eye of God upon them, and also a dear, loving companion by their side. This will have the most salutary effect upon their conduct, as, in the mercy of God, no violent temptation is permitted to assail the Christian without the voice of conscience being immediately raised to warn the soul of its danger. He should, however, teach that guardian angels are not merely given as companions, but as helpers, in the time of temptation. But he should be equally careful to impress upon their minds a sense of their responsibility to God, before whose tribunal they must one day render an account of every thought, word, action, or omission. In doing so, he must not, however, go too far, or speak so imprudently as to make the children imagine the keeping of the commandments and the leading of a good life impossible, or that God delights in remembering faults, to punish them. He is, indeed, just, but He Himself assures us that "His mercies are above all His works."

The little ones should be taught to love God, and to serve Him out of love. O how difficult, yet how important, is this part of their training! How wide a field is here opened for doing good! But the teacher should not deal in mere speculation; his work is one eminently practical.

If the little ones are restless, as they will often be, or if some of the more lively are at innocent, childish tricks, it may be overlooked to some extent, if it is not done in contempt of authority, and does not interfere with the recitation. In the maintenance of order, where the younger children are concerned, the teacher should not be stricter than is necessary for carrying out the object of the school.

I shall now close with a few general remarks to all teachers. In the first place, they should show respect for the superintendent and for one another. They should not give any of their time to the entertaining of visitors; but, having answered such of their questions as may be thought to require it, they should leave the rest to the superintendent. Their work should be done *thoroughly*, whether they are able to do much or little. They should constantly study to improve; and, to that end, it will be profitable for them, after recitation, to examine closely into the manner in which they have conducted it, noting the errors committed, in order to avoid them in future. They should act conscientiously before God, for nothing could be more fatal to the

respect which the children should entertain for them, than for these to see,—and, if it exist, it cannot escape their notice,—that the teachers are continually watching the movements of the superintendent.

Teachers should never give a command unless it is reasonable, necessary, and within the power of the child to obey; nor then, unless it is likely to be complied with, or obedience can be enforced; and, when an order is given, it should not be repeated if the teacher is certain the children have heard and understood it. Every command that is given and not obeyed, weakens the authority of the teacher. He should, also, be careful not to adopt plans, supposed to be for the benefit of the class, unless he foresees that he will be able to carry them into execution, and that, when carried out, they will be of real advantage to the class. Every failure a teacher meets with, in matters of this kind, weakens the respect of the children for him; and justly, for it manifests a weakness of judgment or of will.

Teachers should cultivate feelings of kindness for the children, and greet them with a smile at every meeting: it will produce most pleasing fruits, and greatly facilitate the work of instruction. They should study to make their intercourse with the children a lesson on refinement; for many a child of the poor has a most noble nature, if it were only cultivated by the hand of prudent kindness and urbanity. In fine, they should

try never to meet the children without making them better; but this, be it remembered, more by manner than by word. If mutual affection unite the hearts of the teachers and children, it will do more than all else to secure regular attendance, and all the other requisites of success.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## Incentives to Study.

The love of applause is the first passion that manifests itself in infancy. Even before infants are able to talk, they will be seen to take a pleasure in attracting the attention of their elders, by whatever they have learned, from their limited experience, is capable of winning applause. Later on in life, when the faculties of the mind are sufficiently developed for reflecting, the consciousness of their supposed superiority will be a constant source of gratification. While the injudicious fostering of this propensity makes what are called "spoiled children," its discreet development prepares the way for whatever success is to crown the efforts of the child, and, later, of the youth. The child that is permitted to grow up insensible to the pleasures arising out of the successful employment of the physical and mental powers with which he is endowed, or indifferent to the impression which their proper employment will produce upon others, will pass through life alike useless to himself and to mankind. This love of excelling is the flame which the teacher must fan with discreet approbation, and, if need be, applause, if he wishes the pupils to advance with pleasure. This he can do

either by praising, by awarding a higher position in class, or by giving a premium, as an evidence of the child's superiority. But, while nothing conduces more to success, nothing is more difficult to manage, or requires greater prudence; and in nothing are the children more on the alert to detect any semblance of favoritism. To be productive of good, incentives, of whatever kind, should have the following characteristics:

1. The child should never be permitted to lose sight of the truth that he is obliged to study to know his religious duties, and that premiums are not given as the ultimate reward of diligence, but rather as an encouragement in the acquiring of that knowledge which he is bound, under the severest penalties, to possess.

2. Premiums should be awarded in such a manner as to be continuous in their influence, and not merely to spur the children to the attainment of a certain object, and then to lose their potency. No little difficulty, however, will be experienced in imparting this quality to them, as will be readily seen by those who study the matter attentively.

3. Premiums should be given with reference to the *efforts* made by the children, and not solely with reference to the *result* attained by superior natural ability. And here an almost insurmountable difficulty is met with. For, what right has a teacher to award a premium to a child who has studied but one or two hours a week, and knows his lesson, while another has devoted to it four or five hours of patient toil, and fails to answer

promptly? And how is he to ascertain who has been diligent, and who has not?

4. Premimus should be given in such a manner as not to fill the successful child with excessive pride, nor the unsuccessful ones with despondency.

5. Premiums should attach the children to the school and the teacher.

6. Finally, it is superfluous to say that, in awarding premiums, the teacher should studiously avoid favoritism.

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### § 1. INTANGIBLE INCENTIVES.

Incentives to study naturally divide themselves into *intangible*, or such as cannot be seen and exhibited; and *tangible*, or such as can be retained and displayed in after-time, as the trophy of a juvenile victory. And first, of *intangible* incentives. These are divided into such as are found in the mind of the child, in the approbation or applause of teacher, parents, and pastor, and in the relative position in class.

Fortunately for him, the child possesses in the depths of his own mind a fund of incentives which, if judiciously acted upon, will urge him forward, afford him pleasure, and, at the same time, be free from many of the dangers of abuse which are always present, when external agencies are resorted to. The teacher need have no fear in stimulating the children by the pleasure, advantage, and necessity of a knowledge of the truths

of religion ; and by the disgrace, unhappiness, and danger of an ignorance of them. In the same manner he is free to enlarge on the pleasure arising from the consciousness that they have gained the approbation of all who are interested in their advancement. The teacher should never withhold from the children the pleasure they would derive, and which is due to their efforts, of knowing that they have realized his expectation. They have a wish to please him, and, if they have done so, he should afford them the satisfaction of knowing it. Censure may at times be resorted to with advantage ; but it should not be excessive, nor proceed from passion, but rather from a feeling of regret. Care must, however, be taken not to permit this sorrow to assume the garb of weakness. The fear of punishment may be brought to bear upon children whom other motives have failed to improve ; but it is an incentive of questionable propriety, and should seldom go beyond placing the child in such a position—kneeling, standing, or sitting apart from the other members of the class—as would indicate, rather than inflict, a punishment. Attempting to shame a child is an extremely dangerous experiment, as it generally rouses the baser passions ; and even if the teacher feels that he can safely resort to it, yet he should always do so with great moderation. As to ridicule, it is in the highest degree incompatible with the idea of teaching a child the fear and love of God, and should never find a place in the exercises of the Sunday-school.

It remains to speak of the commendatory remarks of the teacher. Judiciously made, they are capable of effecting great good, and can seldom be dispensed with. The only children who are likely to be injured by them, —supposing, of course, that the teacher never proceeds to extremes,—are those who always give satisfaction; and with these there is little danger, for the position they hold in class is a sufficient indication of their superiority, and no special praise is rendered necessary. A word of commendation will not be out of place with the children of limited ability, for a sense of their inferiority, and the rebuking presence of the talented few, will act as a check upon any feelings of pride. Upon the one or two dull children who may be found in the class, the teacher may safely bestow a liberal praise, whenever it is at all deserved: it will neither awaken feelings of pride in them, nor of jealousy in the others. I am greatly in favor of *trapping*, as it is called, in class, when it can be done, and of giving the child, upon the spot, the reward he has merited. Exciting emulation in this manner is seldom liable to abuse, for all are witnesses of the justness of the reward. It has the additional advantage of showing all who enter the room the relative merit of the children: a circumstance to which they are by no means indifferent. Much more might be added to these remarks; but I shall go no further than to remind the teacher that the moment he discovers that any one of these incentives has lost its efficacy, or is producing an effect detrimental to the children or the class, he should immediately discontinue it.

### § 2. TANGIBLE INCENTIVES TO STUDY.

The question of rewards or premiums is one that is surrounded with many and serious difficulties, and is one, too, upon which there is great diversity of opinion among educators. I do not propose to treat the subject exhaustively, but merely to say so much as will enable the superintendent and teachers to take a broader view of it, and, by a knowledge of both sides, to act without imprudence, and without exposing themselves to the danger of committing errors that might be detrimental to the children, or might weaken their respect for the teachers, and thus contract their sphere of usefulness.

The following is a brief summary of the arguments for and against premiums. In favor of them it is said: 1. That long-continued experience has shown that premiums are useful; if not, it would be impossible to account for the universal custom of awarding them in every species of competition. 2. The hope of winning a prize increases the interest of the young in study. 3. It promotes useful competition. On the other side it is urged: 1. That the pursuit of the prize causes the pupils to lose sight of the higher motives of study. 2. That the benefits to be derived from the awarding of premiums are necessarily confined to a few. 3. That there is great difficulty in awarding them justly. 4. That unkind and jealous feelings are apt to arise among those who contend for the prize. 5. That the prize is a factitious and arbitrary reward for diligence

in study, or propriety in conduct. Having thus stated the arguments, I shall leave the superintendent and teachers to draw their own conclusions, warning them, at the same time, not to be too precipitate in doing so.

It must not be supposed that no expense should be incurred by the church in the instruction of the junior portion of the congregation. A Sunday-school cannot be conducted at all, much less successfully, without expense. For my own part, without wishing to make light of the opinion of others who may differ from me, I maintain that, notwithstanding the seemingly insurmountable difficulties attending the awarding of premiums, they are yet necessary in a Sunday-school, especially for the younger portion of the children; but, in the awarding of them, the following should be observed, in addition to what has been said at the beginning of this chapter:—

1. The teacher should scrupulously fulfil the promises he makes to the children; both because he should instruct them by example to esteem their own word as sacred, and also because they will expect him to keep the promises he has made, and will be disappointed, and lose part of their respect for him, should he fail to do so.

2. There should not be a regular system of premiums established. It would entail unnecessary expense, would by its sameness soon lose its efficacy, and the children would, ere long, demand the premiums as a matter of right, rather than a mark of the teacher's

good-will. The children should never be permitted to forget that they are debtors to the teacher, not the teacher to them. And those who have the care of children should, on their part, never lose sight of the fundamental principle, that children want, and must have, variety in everything. Of themselves they seek it in the plays which, with them, are altogether arbitrary.

3. Premiums should reward, not proficiency only, which depends, to a great extent, upon the gifts of nature, but also punctuality in attending and becoming deportment in class, which are within the reach of the least talented among the children, and are, in a certain sense, as valuable as knowledge.

4. Premiums should not only be awarded impartially, but should, if possible, be of such a nature that the teacher may give them without even exposing himself to the suspicion of favoritism.

5. Finally, with the younger children, premiums should be given more frequently, and consequently be of less value than with older ones.

In their distribution, premiums may be divided into three classes: a valuable premium, given at the semi-annual examination to the best one among all the children of the male department, and another in the same manner to the female department of the school; a premium of less value awarded to the best child in each class at the same or at another examination; and the pictures or rewards of merit given to the members of the prayer-classes.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## Examinations, and Awarding of Premiums.

It is impossible to maintain the interest of the children in the Sunday-school without the assistance of an occasional solemn examination; and, indeed, it would be a species of injustice to them to deprive them of all opportunity of giving their parents and friends a proof of their proficiency, by publicly contesting for the championship. However large children may be, they are still children, and cannot, in many respects, be treated as adults. A public examination of this kind would hardly be productive of great good, if held at more distant intervals than twice in the year; nor if held more frequently. And since it is intended for the gratification of all, children, parents, teachers and pastor, the children who take the most active part should have that part enlivened by contesting for a premium of sufficient value to excite a lively competition. Singing by the children should also be introduced into the examination, at intervals, as a relief. The manner of conducting the examination should be such as would afford all the children an equal opportunity of contesting for the prize; for the smaller are supposed to have

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY



studied as diligently as the larger, and are as much entitled to a reward for it. I shall leave it to the superintendent and teachers to adopt the plan which, under the circumstances, appears to them best suited; merely remarking that time, labor and patience will be necessary, and the larger the school, the more of each. The lesson for examination should be designated some Sundays previously, to afford time for a review, and should comprise all that part of the Catechism that has been studied since the last similar exercise. But, in the awarding of premiums, a plan must be adopted that will include regularity of attendance and becoming deportment, no less than proficiency in the Christian Doctrine. If the school is too large to examine both the male and the female department on the same day, they should be taken on two consecutive Sundays; for the examination, to be productive of good, must be thorough, and the last class called up should be treated as deliberately as the first. The children will naturally expect to remain in session longer than at an ordinary recitation; and if it be thought necessary, a short recess may be given. But I do not recommend this, as it may be found difficult to restore the children to their places and to order, without considerable loss of time. When two Sundays are taken, the awarding of premiums should be reserved for the latter. This should be attended with some degree of solemnity, and a few remarks should be made by the pastor,—who, of course, will perform this part of

the ceremony,—in which he will dwell, not so much on the value of the premium as such, and the honor of having won it, as on the gratifying evidence it affords of diligence in study, and a knowledge of the Christian Doctrine. The principal reward should, in the case of the larger children at least, be accompanied with a diploma, or printed testimonial, which should be preserved in after-life, as an evidence of their early proficiency in religious knowledge. Apart from the honest pride which the man or woman may take in these, later on in life, they often serve as a silent rebuke that may recall a wanderer whom evil associations may have caused to err from the path of virtue, in which he advanced so honorably in the morning of life.

As regards the second class of premiums, that is, those which may be given with profit to the best member of each class, they should be of less value than the first, and may be awarded, as has been said, at the semi-annual examination, or more frequently, if it be thought conducive to the advancement of the children. But I am of opinion that twice in the year is quite sufficient; and giving them at the public examination will both add to the solemnity of the occasion, and help to reconcile such classes to their disappointment as have failed to win the first. The examination for these should take place beforehand, the superintendent setting apart as many of the Sundays immediately preceding the public examination as will be required for all the classes. This one is held with a view of

ascertaining the proficiency of every child in the school, and, for that reason, should be thorough and searching; and the teacher's class-book should be consulted to ascertain the regularity of attendance, and the nature of the children's conduct. The awarding of the premiums should be reserved for the day of the public examination.

In the distribution of the third class of premiums —those given to the prayer-classes—there can be but little attempt at system. It may be left to their teachers, supposing, of course, that the children receiving the encouragements should have done something more than the others to entitle them to a reward.

A few years ago I adopted a system of marks and premiums, which I found productive of great good in the Sunday-school. The principal objection to it is that it lacks variety; but the genius of the teacher will enable him to supply this deficiency. I still continue it, but with those children only who have not yet made their first holy Communion. The system is this: A few hundred small tickets or checks are procured, with the words, "Good Lesson," printed on them; the number to be obviously determined by the size of the school. An appropriate text of Scripture may also be added at the discretion of the superintendent. One of these is given, every Sunday, to every child that has a perfect lesson, although several should be perfect in the same class; and a certain number, say ten, fifteen, or twenty, is fixed, that will entitle the child

receiving it to a premium. Upon this he returns the tickets to the teacher, and begins anew. For the younger children the number should not exceed ten, because they require more frequent, though less costly, encouragement. I should not, however, permit the number entitling the holder to a premium to exceed fifteen, for few children are disposed to wait patiently more than four months for the reward of their labor. Too long a delay would produce a feeling of discouragement.

The whole matter is thus put into the hands of the children. The entire class are witnesses that each good mark given is merited; no room is left for the suspicion of favoritism, and regular attendance and good behavior are secured. The ticket is withheld for unbecoming conduct.

These tickets may also be used in the distribution of books from the library; and a rule might be adopted requiring one from every child that applies for a book, as an evidence that he does not neglect the Catechism for the sake of the story-book.

With this I shall dismiss the subject of premiums, but not without repeating, that, however difficult it may be, and, apparently, impossible at times, to award them with perfect justice, they cannot be entirely dispensed with. There is this reason, if there was no other, for retaining them, that in schools they are almost universally awarded.

# CHAPTER XV.

## Visiting the Children.

Visiting may be considered under two aspects : visits of teachers, who make social calls, but with an ulterior view of benefiting the children ; and those of persons directly appointed to secure the attendance of habitual absentees. And first of visits by the teachers. The Sunday-school teacher cannot manifest too deep an interest in the welfare of the children, not only while they are in class, but at all other times ; and the more closely they are united to him by the bond of Christian affection, the more will it enlarge the sphere of his usefulness. They are sometimes won to God by an interest shown in matters not immediately connected with the school. The children, witnessing the lively interest manifested in their welfare by their teacher, will conceive a higher opinion of him, and find a pleasure in contributing to his happiness. Should they discover that this consisted in their closer application to study, they would not hesitate to gratify him by an unusual degree of diligence. Parents also, seeing the disinterested zeal of the teacher, will be animated to greater exertion for the advancement of their children. This is much to be desired ; for one of the greatest dif-

ficulties against which the teacher has to contend, is the small amount of study done by the children at home. Opportunities would also be presented to the teacher of performing little acts of kindness, which would generally be productive of the happiest results, especially if those in whose favor they were done were of the poorer class of society. If the children are the most indigent of his class, this visit of the teacher, if accompanied with Christian charity, will be regarded as a special favor by the parents, and will not fail to win every heart to him. And here let me remark that, the poorer the children are, the greater should be the kindness of the teacher, whether in class, at their homes, or when he accidentally meets them. Those who are able to awaken the gratitude of the poor, will open for themselves a fountain of the purest happiness. With the poor there is little art of dissimulation; their expressions of gratitude flow warm from the heart. Besides, why should we not treat them kindly? They have enough to suffer from a cold, unfeeling world; and every object, as the teacher enters their humble homes, speaks of the condition to which adverse fortune has reduced them. A word, an act of kindness, while it costs nothing, will be a ray of sunshine there where rays are most needed.

If a member of his class be sick, it will be a meritorious work for the teacher to visit him, and manifest the interest he feels in his condition. Any kind office performed at such a time will be greatly enhanced by

that circumstance. If, on the other hand, the child be an habitual absentee from the school, he should be visited, and induced to attend with greater regularity; and a visit from the teacher will effect more than that of a member of the visiting committee. The teacher's visit will be thought to have been made from disinterested motives, while that of the other is known to be, in a measure, professional.

But visiting, to be productive of good, requires prudence. In the class-room the teacher is in the presence of the children; on a visit, he is before the world, and before those especially who will have a natural suspicion that he is come to inquire into something which they regard as their own concern, and the very inquiry into which is a silent reproach to them of a want of diligence in the performance of an important duty. Against this feeling he must contend; and it will be all the more difficult, as many of our teachers are young, and do not command that respect which is instinctively paid to a person more advanced in years. If his zeal in the instruction of his class has enabled the children to bring a favorable account of him home to their parents, it will pave the way for him; and, much more, if the children themselves hasten to welcome him as he enters their home: for parents are instinctively attracted to those for whom their younger children show signs of affection. But in all cases he must proceed with prudence, and in a spirit of great kindness in the prosecution of his mission, and not be too hasty in coming to the abuse against

which he wishes to protest. On rare occasions it may even be necessary for him to pay a second visit before broaching the subject. But I do not suppose that he has this disagreeable work to perform at every visit, or that he never calls upon the children except when this is rendered necessary. It may be the case in the smaller number of his visits; but if it be, the advice that has been given should be strictly adhered to. Any assumption of authority would be out of place, both because it is unbecoming in itself, and also because he has no means of asserting it. He should kindly persuade, and should dwell upon the disgrace and punishment of ignorance and neglect; on the child's falling behind in the class; on his inability to be prepared for examination, first Communion, etc., with the rest of the children, and on such other motives as he may judge to be opportune under the circumstances. But he should not urge them with too much warmth, nor assume the air of a preacher; and, above all, he should not reflect on the conduct of the parents, however criminal it may be. He should inform the pastor, if he deem it expedient, for he alone has the right to admonish parents. The absentee should be induced to promise to attend in future; and, when the teacher has succeeded in obtaining the promise, he should express the full confidence he has in the child's fidelity to his word. The child will then do the same, and keep it, if anything would induce him to do so. A great point is gained when children are taught to respect their word.

Nor should he visit one part of the class, to the exclusion of the rest: it might excite petty jealousies, and cause parents to reflect unfavorably on his conduct. Especially should he be careful not to visit exclusively the richest children, or those who advance most satisfactorily, or who show him the greatest marks of kindness. On the contrary, let him call most frequently on the poor, and those who advance with the greatest difficulty; for, while it will serve to encourage them, it will not excite the jealousy of the others.

There may be some persons who would question the propriety of visits at all by the teachers. But, if they are attended with prudence and kindness, they will invariably be productive of good. In general, it is much better if the teacher can induce an absentee to attend, than if recourse is had to a member of the visiting committee.

As the visits of the teacher are of a social character, it is difficult to lay down rules for the regulation of his conduct that will embrace every variety of circumstances. But the calls of the visiting committee are exclusively of a business nature, although clothed, at times, in a social garb, and, for that reason, can be governed to a greater extent by general rules. The members of this committee should, in the first place, receive such instructions from the pastor as he may see fit to give, and follow them to the letter. The people will regard them as representatives of the pastor, and, to a certain extent,

will recognize his authority in them. Under circumstances to which his instructions do not extend, they should follow those given above to teachers, as far as they are applicable. The members of the visiting committee should be persons who could persuade strongly, without bitterness or reproach, or recourse to authority. The latter it is well to have, but not well to show. When others recognize it, it is an instrument of good; but not so when the person who is invested with it has voluntary recourse to it. They should studiously avoid giving offence to parents: no good can come of it. In dealing with both parents and children, they should ever remember that Christian zeal, tempered with kindness, is their most powerful weapon, and should study to win the hearts of the children, so that they, although ashamed, should never be afraid to meet them. *The moment that any one who has to deal with children repels them by his manner, his usefulness is at an end.* He may, by dint of fear, force them through outward formalities, but he studies in vain to touch the heart.

The superintendent will furnish the names of the children requiring visits; the number of the visiting committee, and the district for each to visit, will be assigned by the pastor. Toward the close of the recitation, the members of the committee should call at the schoolroom, to ascertain the result of their visits, and receive the names of such as are to be visited on

or before the following Sunday. They should not, however, mention the names of absentees to any persons except the pastor, superintendent, and teachers of the classes to which they respectively belong. These remarks will, it is thought, be sufficient for their guidance.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## Minor Topics.

Besides the subjects treated of in the foregoing chapters, there is a number of others which cannot be wholly passed over in silence, and which yet cannot be discussed at length, both because they do not pertain so directly to the Sunday-school as those already treated, and also because, although important in themselves, an exhaustive discussion of them would swell this volume beyond the size which I have proposed to myself. The first of these upon which I shall remark is the library.

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### § 1. SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY.

Every school should try, as soon as possible after its organization, to procure a small collection of books for the children. The library should then be gradually increased, but not so rapidly as to become a burden, either to the children, their parents, or the parish. A limited collection of suitable books is more to be desired, than filling the shelves of the library with every book for the young that can be found on publishers' catalogues. Catholic publishers, no less than others,

sometimes issue works of inferior merit, and perhaps a few of no merit whatever. Children will read, and they should be encouraged to do so. But two evils are to be guarded against: that of permitting them to set the Catechism aside, for the sake of the story-book, and that of preferring works of the secular to those of the religious press. For this reason great care should be taken in purchasing books, and no one but a person who is fully competent should be permitted to select them; and, when they are procured, a code of prudent library rules should be drawn up and enforced. Some persons have no knowledge of the juvenile literature issued by the Catholic press, and others have no idea of what is suited to the taste and capacity of the young. As an illustration of this lack of judgment, I may say that I was once present at a meeting of teachers, in which they were discussing the question of premium books to be awarded to their classes at an examination about to be held. In a variety of opinions, there was one teacher of a class of boys who had but lately made their first Communion, who loudly maintained that no book was to be compared to St. Liguori's "Preparation for Death," and that, in consequence of its transcendent merits, he would have it, and no other. It would be the height of imprudence to intrust the selection of books for the library to such a person as this.

Persons selecting books from a catalogue should be no less on their guard against placing too much reliance

on what are called "opinions of the press," regarding any given work. Those found in newspapers afford but a general, and often a very indifferent, idea of the merits of the book; for, although it may have been criticised unmercifully by some papers, and may have merited at least a part of it, publishers will quite naturally pass over these notices, and take such only as flatter the book which they have printed to sell. I have written a great many "notices" of books myself, and know well how it is done.

For the rest, I shall leave to the pastor and superintendent to determine the time most convenient for the distribution of the books, and the best means of preventing them from being lost, reminding the superintendent, at the same time, not to lose sight of what has been said on this subject in the chapter upon his duties.

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### § 2. SACRED MUSIC.

Children should be taught from an early age to sing hymns. On this subject the Abbé Dubois remarks:

"Do not neglect hymns; singing pleases children, rouses them, and prevents them from thinking of their play. Try to make them learn a great number by heart; they will sing them instead of bad songs, and this will edify the parish. Collect them together from time to time, at the parsonage or elsewhere, to teach

them singing. Make every one sing, except those who, having no ear, might put the others out; and sing only those hymns the air of which is easy for them to catch."*

It may be further remarked, that the more children sing at their ordinary work, or in their leisure time, the more innocent and cheerful they are. Some of them will sing in their little trials and sorrows, and it is a relief to them. But no one willingly sings in anger; and hence, when we hear a child sing, we may feel assured that no storm of passion ruffles the calm of his little heart. Parents should encourage their children to sing at home, and permit them to meet in little parties for that purpose, at seasonable hours, and under proper supervision, where distance does not prevent it.

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### § 3. REGISTRY OF ATTENDANCE.

A means of registering the attendance of the children, so as to show at a glance, not only to pastor, superintendent and teacher, but also to parents, the punctuality of each child, is much to be desired, especially in large schools. The teacher's class-book cannot be depended upon in all cases, for some teachers can with difficulty be induced to keep it properly, while others will frequently absent themselves, without giving it to their substitute; and, even if properly kept, it would

* "Zeal in the Work of the Ministry," p. 503.

require time to examine each one. The following is an improvement upon a system introduced for the first time, so far as I have been able to learn, by Rev. G. S. Grace, into the Sunday-school attached to St. Paul's Cathedral, Pittsburg, and is the most simple and perfect that I have yet seen. Cards similar to the subjoined diagram, but about an inch longer, are printed in numbers sufficient to meet the requirements of the school. They should be of strong, heavy card, so as not to be easily torn.

Attendance.

| Jan. | | | Feb. | | | Mar. | | | April. | | | May. | | | June. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 14 | 21 | 4 | 11 | 18 | 4 | 11 | 18 | 1 | 8 | 15 | 6 | 13 | 20 | 3 | 10 | 17 |
| 28 | | | 25 | | | 25 | | | 22 | 29 | | 27 | | | 24 | | |

ST. _____ SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Parents will observe that the numbers *punched out* represent the Sundays on which the child was present at Sunday-school since _____ 187

_____ Supt. _____ Pastor.

Attendance.

| July. | | | Aug. | | | Sept. | | | Oct. | | | Nov. | | | Dec. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 15 | 5 | 12 | 19 | 2 | 9 | 16 | 7 | 14 | 21 | 4 | 11 | 18 | 2 | 9 | 16 |
| 22 | 29 | | 26 | | | 23 | 30 | | 28 | | | 25 | | | 23 | 30 | |

One of these is given to each of the children—except, perhaps, the smallest in the prayer-class—at the beginning of the year, or when they are introduced for the first time into the school, and his name is written by the teacher on the back of it, so that, if lost, the finder will know to whom to return it. But as the children, especially the smaller ones, would soon lose or soil their large card, if brought every Sunday to the school, small tickets or checks should be procured, say one and a half inches in length by an inch in width, and of five or six different colors, numbered 1st, 2d, etc., to correspond to that number of Sundays, thus:

ATTENDANCE.

St._____ S. School.

1st Sunday.

One of these should be given to each child in attendance, till the whole number of different colors is given out. The children are then required to bring, on the next Sunday, whatever small tickets they have, and, with them, the large card. The superintendent, or, better, a person appointed for that purpose, provides himself with a punch similar to those used by conductors on railroads, and, going round, takes up all the small tickets from each child, punching out of the large card the numbers corresponding to the days upon which the

child has attended, leaving those untouched on which he was absent. It is then returned to the child, and he again begins to accumulate small tickets till the next proper Sunday to return them. This system of registry is very convenient, and is one which, in my opinion, should commend itself to superintendents and directors of Sunday-schools. By looking at the large card, one is able to tell at any time which and how many Sundays a child has been present or absent during the year. The children, too, will soon become proud of their cards, will compare them with one another, and study to have as many of the numbers punched out as possible. Parents also will know whether their children play truant or not. The cards are taken up at the end of the year, when those for the next year are distributed and are given to the secretary, from which to make a general report of attendance.

A much simpler but less perfect form of the attendance-card is that in which the names of the months are omitted, and no other figures except 1, 2, 3, etc., to 52,—the whole number of Sundays in the year,—inserted in two lines on the margin of the card. This is the first form in which I saw and used it.

As an objection to this system, it may be urged that, if the school were large, it would be impossible to punch all the cards. But the colors of the small tickets will greatly facilitate the work, and it will be no difficulty whatever for one person to punch three hundred in the hour allotted to the recitation. And should

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the school be very large, the male department may be separated into two divisions, and the female department in the same manner, making it quite easy for one person to punch the tickets of a school numbering twelve hundred, or even more.

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### § 4. FESTIVALS AND EXCURSIONS.

Treats of this kind are very agreeable to the children, especially to those of the poor, and those living in cities. Persons accustomed to the country and its scenery cannot appreciate such amusements at their proper value. But the little ones who live in narrow alleys and small apartments—where, from one year's end to another, they are obliged to breathe an unwholesome atmosphere—will regard it as a smile of heaven to be permitted to live for one day, at least, that life so congenial to the spirit of childhood. Such a festival should then, be held at least once every season, and the wealthier members of the congregation should be requested to contribute toward it, and interest themselves in it. The preparation should not be hurried, but should, be intrusted to a committee of prudent and energetic teachers, whose study should be to increase the joy of the little ones, while they removed every temptation from them.

Besides these, there is a number of other topics that might be discussed in this place; but I do not think

it necessary to introduce them. When they present themselves, they can safely be left to the prudence, experience, and zeal of those whom they concern, to treat them in the manner that appears most expedient under the circumstances.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## The Sunday-School Teacher's Reward.

It will be seen from the foregoing chapters that the duties implied in the office of Sunday-school teacher are far more onerous and responsible than is generally supposed, and demand a degree of self-sacrifice, in both the preparation and the teaching, which is very considerable. But, if the labor and sacrifice are great, the reward is yet greater. It is both natural and supernatural. There are few who do not find a pleasure in the society of the young and innocent, and who are not willing to spend a portion of their time with them, if it should be from no other motive than the relaxation it affords from more serious occupations. There is no accounting for tastes; but I have always thought it a bad sign to see a young gentleman or lady adverse to the society of innocent children. Besides, Sunday afternoon is generally a season of relaxation for this class of persons, and is, consequently, devoted to that which affords it. But when any one who has the welfare of the young at heart looks about him, especially in the cities and centres of population, and witnesses the ruin which the ignorance of religious and moral duties and obligations is bringing upon countless immortal souls,

purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and not with corruptible silver and gold, he cannot but be deeply moved, and induced to stem the tide of evil by any means in his power. No other pleasure could be compared to the reward which the good lives of the children, whom his instructions have kept on the path of duty and innocence, will afford. Their innocence and virtue are a constant appeal to heaven in his behalf, and the angels of these little ones will rise up and call him blessed.

Common philanthropy has induced many persons of wealth and education, who were not Catholics, and hardly Christians, in the broadest sense of the term, to devote their time and fortune to ameliorating the condition of the poor and ignorant; and the result of their labors, while it spurred them on, was deemed a sufficient reward. But when, as with us, religion ennobles and rewards the labor of reclaiming these neglected little ones, at the same time that it imposes an obligation of charity to do so, it should elicit the heartiest coöperation of all who wish truly to benefit mankind. The gratitude of parents and pastor; the prayers that are offered up for the welfare of those who so generously undertake the work of instruction; but, most of all, the fact that, by doing so, the teachers are leading the poor and ignorant to know and love God, and are furnishing them with the means of preserving their innocence, and of fulfilling their moral and religious duties in a manner pleasing to Him, constitute

a reward that all should be emulous of receiving. But to go further. If, as Jesus Christ Himself assures us, a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, will merit an eternal recompense, it cannot be doubted that a work of such transcendent merit as the instruction of the ignorant, will receive one incomparably greater. If he who shall teach the least of the divine commands, as our Lord assures us, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven; and if he who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his own soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins, much more shall he who teaches the young their whole duty receive a blessing, and work out his salvation. But, beyond this, the teacher has the explicit promise of the Spirit of Truth, that "they that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."

In addition to these rewards, which are sufficiently ample to encourage Sunday-school teachers in their noble and charitable work, I shall add a list of the indulgences, plenary and partial, with which the Church, as an earnest of her good-will, has enriched the work of instruction, and with which she recompenses those whose charity prompts them to engage in it. They are transcribed from the *Raccolta*, pp. 337–8; in which, after relating the circumstances attending the granting of the indulgences, and adding the words of Pope St. Pius V, who calls teaching "a most holy work," and those of Paul V, who says of the teacher, "His work is

the salvation of souls, and the preservation of the Christian commonwealth," the reasons for granting them are given. The Holy Father says that, "in order to animate the faithful the more diligently to teach and to learn Christian Doctrine," the following indulgences are granted:—

1. The indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines (periods of forty days) to all masters of schools who, on feast-days, shall take their scholars to be instructed in Christian Doctrine, and shall themselves instruct them in it; and to those masters who, on working days, explain Christian Doctrine in their schools, one hundred days' indulgence.

2. The indulgence of one hundred days to fathers and mothers every time they instruct their children and domestics in Christian Doctrine.

3. The indulgence of one hundred days to all the faithful every time they employ themselves for half an hour in teaching or learning the Christian Doctrine.

4. The indulgence of three years, on all feasts of the Blessed Virgin, to the faithful of every age who are accustomed to assemble in school or in church to learn Christian Doctrine, provided they confess on said feasts; and the indulgence of seven years to those who, being of age to communicate, shall on those days receive the Blessed Sacrament.

5. The indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines was added to these indulgences by Clement XII, by a Brief, June 27, 1732, to all the faithful every

time that, having confessed and communicated, they assist at Catechism, doctrinal teaching, or catechise or teach doctrine.

6. He granted, also, the plenary indulgence, after confession and communion, to those who have the pious custom of assisting at, or teaching, Christian Doctrine, on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, on Easter-day, and on the Feast of the Holy Apostles SS. Peter and Paul.

In conclusion, I have only to urge once more upon teachers a continual remembrance of the sacredness of the undertaking in which they are engaged, and the consequences, both temporal and eternal, that depend upon the proper discharge of it. If the world justly applauds the man who exposes his life to rescue a drowning fellow-man, or to snatch from the flames of a burning dwelling one of its unfortunate inmates, how much more are they deserving of gratitude who warn an unsuspecting soul of the toils of Satan, or save it from the snares that he has laid for its innocence and virtue! We venerate the priests of God, and account them happy because they are engaged in the important work of saving souls, and leading them through the perils of this life to the kingdom of heaven. In a narrower sphere, Sunday-school teachers, too, are devoting themselves to the same noble object Nay, more; they are doing that for which Jesus Christ Himself came upon earth, suffered and died. So great, so noble a work is that of assisting to save souls created to the image and

likeness of God, and redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Let teachers, then, be encouraged, seeing they are treading in the very footsteps of the Son of God; and He who inspires them with the thought, and supplies the necessary grace, will not, in His own good time, withhold a bounteous reward.

THE END.

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